

A Brief History of Bedhampton

Compiled by Ralph Cousins



Bedhampton Road circa 1910.

Havant History Booklet No. 50

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Bedhampton and Havant and the Royal Navy

Time Line of Bedhampton

- The springs between Havant and Bedhampton attracted early settlement
- 4200-3000 BC Bevis's Grave Neolithic long barrow on Portsdown
- c.1100 Bedhampton Deer Park enclosed from the Forest of Bere
- c.1140 Chancel arch, the earliest architectural feature of St Thomas's Church built
- c. AD 600-900 Anglo-Saxon cemetery on Portsdown
- 1208 and 1213 King John visited
- 1297 King Edward I visited
- 1320-21 Hugh le Despenser the elder's manor of Bedhampton laid waste by his enemies
- 1325 King Edward II visited
- 1338 Fulling mill at Bedhampton mentioned
- 1496 Documentary evidence for Hermitage Chapel of St James
- c.1536 Sir Richard Cotton (c.1497-1556) rewarded by Henry VIII with stewardship of Bedhampton Park
- 1592 Queen Elizabeth I visited 'Mr Carrells house'
- c.1600 Bedhampton Deer Park disparked
- 1632 Watermills in Bedhampton: a malt mill, fulling mill, paper mill and a wheat mill
- 1688 St Thomas's Church parish registers began
- 1730s Belmont House built
- 1778 William Haines, engraver and painter, born
- 1789 Charles Wentworth Dilke, newspaper editor and writer, born
- c.1790 Belvedere erected on Portsdown in the grounds of Belmont House. Later enlarged as Belmont Castle
- 1800 Customs officers, with the assistance of the Havant Volunteers, seized contraband spirits and tobacco from smugglers near Bedhampton
- 1819 John Keats wrote his poem *The Eve of St Agnes* at the Old Mill House
- 1822 Admiralty semaphore telegraph station on Camp Down commissioned

- 1846-1860 Sir James Stirling, first Governor of Western Australia from 1829-1839, owned Belmont House
- 1847 Camp Down semaphore station decommissioned owing to the introduction of the electric telegraph
- 1854-6 Biscuits baked for the Crimean War
- 1859 Customs officials seized contraband spirits at the *Shepherds Hut*
- 1860 Havant pumping station opened by Borough of Portsmouth Waterworks Company
- 1868 Construction of Fort Purbrook completed. Farlington Redoubt, to which it was connected, was probably completed shortly afterwards
- 1868 Bedhampton National School, designed by Richard William Drew, opened
- 1872 Cosham, Havant and Emsworth Water Order empowered Portsmouth Waterworks Company to supply water to Bedhampton, Havant and Warblington, *et alibi*
- 1875 Catholic Church of St Joseph opened in West Street
- 1878 Primitive Methodist Church opened in West Street
- 1881 Hulbert Road opened, linking Havant and Bedhampton with Waterlooville
- 1906 Bedhampton Halt opened
- 1910 Havant Gas Company gained public lighting contract with Bedhampton Parish Council
- 1911 Fred T Jane, founder of *Jane's Fighting Ships*, moved to Hill House, Bedhampton Hill Road
- c.1913 Fred T Jane started a Scout Troop
- 1950 Former sick-bay of Belmont Naval Camp bought by Bedhampton Parish Church Council for use as parish rooms
- 1957 St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School opened in Hooks Lane
- 1973 Queen Elizabeth II passed through Bedhampton on her way to Portsmouth Dockyard
- 1985 Bedhampton County Infants' School closed

Medieval Bedhampton

John Pile - May 2011

The medieval manor of Bedhampton comprised the whole of the parish, a strip of land and sea that extended six miles from north to south and about a mile and a half from east to west. At the extreme north of the parish, within the Forest of Bere, lay Padnell Common, accessible to the tenants of the manor through a fenced and gated deer park that occupied half the land area of the parish. The deer park provided the lord of the manor with venison and contained fishponds, a rabbit warren and a keeper's lodge.

The best agricultural land was on the coastal plain where the lord's demesne and his tenants' plough-lands formed strips in the open fields, sown in rotation and thrown open to be grazed in common after harvest. Here too were the enclosed pastures, the pasture by the sea and the valuable meadows that provided the hay essential for over-wintering livestock. Bidbury Mead where the Summer Show takes place was largely hay-meadow as its name suggests. The eastern flank of Portsdown was sheepwalk and Langstone Harbour with its mudlands and islands, covering one-third of the area of the parish, provided fish and wildfowl in season.

Domesday Book, compiled in 1086, records two watermills in Bedhampton for the use of 'the hall' and these continued to grind corn for the next 800 years. A fulling mill is recorded in 1286 and this suggests that cloth-making was an important activity. Domesday Book also records two salt-houses where seawater was evaporated to produce salt. Together with the copious springs of excellent water these resources combined to provide an estate of considerable value to its lords.

Although a small community, clustered around the church and manor house, Bedhampton was by no means isolated as it lay on an important route connecting the feudal castles of Lewes, Bramber and Arundel with Portsmouth, Portchester, Southampton and the West Country. It is known from documents signed and sealed at Bedhampton that King John stayed overnight in 1208 and 1213, as did Edward I in 1297 and Edward II in 1325. In 1591 Elizabeth I dined at Bedhampton.

In 1086 the manor of Bedhampton was held by Hugh de Port, a Norman baron from Port-en-Bessin near Bayeux, as a sub-tenant of the Abbot of Winchester, but for most of its later history the manor was in the gift of the king who granted it with other estates to his relatives.

These great feudal lords were rarely, if ever, resident in Bedhampton and the manor was merely a source of revenue. However, the manor house was on at least two occasions occupied 'in dower' by the widows of deceased manorial lords, when the Bishop of Winchester granted them licence to have a private chapel so that the dowager ladies of the manor were not obliged to attend the parish church.

The population of Bedhampton in 1086 was probably around 120 and it would have grown steadily for the next two and a half centuries, perhaps reaching 300 or so before a series of poor harvests and the Black Death in 1348 reduced the population by a third or even a half, if comparisons with better-documented parishes may be made. Most of the inhabitants of Bedhampton lived in the village where they had their farmyards and paddocks and went out to work daily in the open fields, though a few families such as the park-keepers and the millers lived where they worked.

The Church played an important part in the medieval community and a church in Bedhampton is mentioned in Domesday Book. Whether this was a Saxon church, probably of timber construction, or a Norman one built by Hugh de Port is not known. The oldest part of the present building is the chancel arch of c.1140 so it is likely that this is the date that an earlier church was replaced. The medieval dedication was probably to St. Nicholas as it appears in later records, but this is uncertain. A list of rectors from the beginning of the fourteenth century has been compiled from records of institutions in the bishops' registers, and their patrons were the lords of the manor.

A small chapel dedicated to St James, probably the 'Greater', the patron saint of pilgrims, stood close to the bridge that carried the king's highway across the Hermitage Stream. We know this because in 1496 and 1498 bishop Langton issued letters to permit a hermit to receive alms here for his own needs and for the maintenance of the bridge.

Bedhampton's Royal Visitors Remembered

Bedhampton has been visited by royalty on surprisingly numerous occasions; one reason being that the village lay on the main coast road between Chichester and Southampton. The road through Bedhampton was laid down by the Romans immediately after their conquest of Britain in 43 AD and it is by no means fanciful to suggest that the future emperor Vespasian travelled along it on his way to subdue the Iron Age tribes of Dorset.

Royal travellers used the route through Bedhampton when visiting the baronial and royal castles along the south coast - Lewes, Bramber, Arundel, Portchester and Southampton - and as the kings and queens of medieval England were constantly on the move they transacted royal business and sealed and dated letters wherever they happened to be, enabling historians to work out their itineraries.

King John dated letters from Bedhampton on 1st April 1208 and again on 14th and 15th June 1213 when he was en route for Portchester. King Edward I was at Bedhampton on 25th May 1297 and his ill-fated son Edward II was here on 18th May 1325.

Queen Elizabeth I's royal progresses are legendary and her harbingers are recorded as making arrangements for her to dine at 'mr Carre11s house at Bedhampton' on 2nd August 1591.

Details of George I's son's progress through Chichester, Havant and Portsmouth in 1761 are sketchy, but the future king's journey, made during his father's absence in Hanover, would certainly have taken him through the village.

Questions also surround the frequently quoted story told by a former rector of Bedhampton, the Reverend Stokes, that Princess Victoria stayed at Belmont Park with her father the Duke of Kent, although attempts to verify it have so far failed. However, there can be no doubt that Queen Victoria's coffin passed through Bedhampton on the Royal Train as the coffin made its way from Osborne House on the Isle of Wight to Victoria Station on Friday 1st February 1901. One account suggests that owing to earlier delays the funeral train made up for lost time by reaching a speed of 80 miles per hour between Cosham and Havant.

Royal trains have passed through Bedhampton on several occasions since Queen Victoria's reign, but one Royal occasion that will be remembered by many visitors to this year's Bedhampton Show will be that on Friday 20th July 1973 when our present Queen came by car along Bedhampton Road on her way to Portsmouth Dockyard, the route being lined by local schoolchildren eager to catch a glimpse of her.

John Pile. 30th April 2012. Revised 1st November 2012.

Some Notes on the History of Bedhampton

Graham R. Eeles

My first acquaintance with the village of Bedhampton and its history came about earlier this year when I was asked to mount an exhibition on the history of the village to mark the occasion of the 850th anniversary of the Parish Church of St Thomas. Having been allowed only a matter of weeks to raise myself from a state of total ignorance of the village to a state of absolute knowledge of everything appertaining to its history, and being besides of an exceedingly idle nature, I decided that the easiest course, before bothering to look at any of the original records, would be to get hold of whatever had already been written on the history of Bedhampton, and to use that to provide a framework for the exhibition.

Unfortunately my attempt to crib the work of previous scholars came rather unstuck. I did indeed discover no fewer than three publications on the history of Bedhampton; these comprised the relevant section from the Victoria County History of Hampshire, a guide to the history of Bedhampton written by an incumbent of the Parish Church of St Thomas, Bedhampton, early this century, and a far more recent and attractively presented history of Havant and Bedhampton published during the 1970s.

Remarkable, I thought. Such a small village, and yet so much written on its history. Simply use their accounts as a framework to be illustrated by whatever original records I could lay hands on. Unfortunately it wasn't to be quite so easy.

I decided to start with the Victoria County History of Hampshire, published in 1908. What a pity it's not a little more up to date, I thought, but of course

the Victoria County Histories are the standard work for the study of any locality, and are bound to be useful. I noted the copious footnotes with satisfaction: how thoughtful to give a documentary source for practically every statement made relating to Bedhampton.

Yet as I read the account, I became increasingly concerned that the Victoria County History's view of the history of Bedhampton was not exactly what I had hoped to find. It neither told me a great deal about the lives of dead generations of Bedhamptonians nor would it, I suspected, provide an adequate framework for the original records of Bedhampton's history that were accessible to me.

The Victoria County History's description begins with a short note on the derivation of the name of the village, and then continues with a topographical account of Bedhampton as it was in 1908. Great care is taken to note the names of the contemporary occupiers of the largest houses in the village – something of only ephemereal relevance – but less care is taken in the correct spelling of the names of local features, as I discovered when I consulted a map. The description continues with a long and detailed account of the lords of the manor of Bedhampton, a 'who begat whom' list worthy of the Old Testament. At the end of this list is a brief description of the manor house 'pulled down in 1881' – in fact it's still standing, and an even briefer list of references to water-mills and salt-pans in the manor from Domesday on. Then follows a detailed architectural description of the Church, and a brief reference to the church plate and registers, giving inaccurate dates. The account of the history of the village then draws to a close with another long 'who begat whom' list of the descent of the advowson of the church, and a bald reference to an intriguing local charity begun in 1875, and dedicated to the further education of girls.

So what did I hope to find, you may ask. Well, a topographical description of the village certainly, but one with rather more historical depth and with some geographic basis also: some indication, in fact, of the factors which caused a village to grow up on that site. Certainly an account of the manor, but one paying more attention to the water-mills and salt-pans and less to the lords of the manor, to most of whom Bedhampton Manor was only one of many from which they drew their income, and who would probably have spent little or no time in the village, leaving the manor and manor house to

be administered by a steward. I would have liked, that is, to find more about the economic and social basis and the development – or decline – of the village, more about the lives of the people who actually lived there. So I consigned the Victoria County History, and its footnotes, to outer darkness.

Secondly, I looked at the little illustrated guide to the history of Bedhampton produced by one of the incumbents of the Parish Church of St Thomas, Bedhampton, during the early part of this century. Actually I should have been warned by its publication date a few years after the Victoria County History of Hampshire: the good rector had plagiarised that work shamelessly, and the guide was little more than a watered down version of the Victoria County History's account of Bedhampton's history with a few extra mistakes added for good measure. Even the illustrations were so small and of such poor quality that they were useless for exhibition purposes. In any case, the photographs were mainly of the church, manor house and other large houses in the village that still look more or less the same! So I consigned that booklet also to outer darkness.

Finally I turned in desperation to the third account of the history of Bedhampton. Here also I was to be disappointed, despite the fact that the book – on Havant and Bedhampton – was published as recently as the 1970s and might reasonably have been expected to reflect the views on the writing of local history of such people as Professor Hoskins. I can do no better than quote Nigel Yates' review of the book which appeared in the first volume of the Portsmouth Archives Review:

Despite the writings of Professors Hoskins and Pugh, and the work of the Department of English Local History at Leicester University, the Standing Conference for Local History and others, the structure of most parish histories has remained virtually unchanged for more than a century: an obsession with the usually unhelpful local references in the Domesday Book, an interest in the church (though normally only from an architectural viewpoint), a belief in the virtue of agriculture as opposed to industry, a strange delight in the origin of place-names and the careers of local eccentrics. The present work falls within the established foundation; it is a useful collection of materials for the history of two communities, but it is not a study of the development of those communities.

Exactly; however, when I attempted to use this volume simply as a source-book for the history of Bedhampton, I soon encountered problems. The author gives many useful facts – including for instance population figures for the village at various dates during the middle ages – but irritatingly he does not state the sources of his information. My irritation changed to downright suspicion when I found documentary proof that some of the author's statements were false. For example, he states that during the eighteenth century (and here I quote) *in order to bring more land into cultivation locally the park at Bedhampton was ploughed up and divided into farms; this increase in arable farming and the enclosure of the Park made a tremendous difference to the value of the estate.* In fact, a survey of the manor of Bedhampton taken in 1632, and now in the Portsmouth City Records Office, records the fact that the Park at Bedhampton had already been 'disesparked' and *turned to arables and pasture* before 1632. Unfortunately the author shows more interest in retailing long anecdotes concerning mythical medieval ladies of the manor of Bedhampton than in establishing fact. Even where he does establish fact, its value is questionable: for instance, the claim is made that this is the first historical account of twentieth century Havant and Bedhampton, yet this account is on the level of *the Eclipse football team merged with Havant Rovers in 1903 and they won the Midhurst Six-a-side Tournament in 1908.* So I consigned that account of Bedhampton's history to outer darkness also.

However, this unfortunately left me with the problem of formulating my own structure for a history of Bedhampton. I could, I suppose, simply have gone to whatever records were available and arranged whatever material was available on the history of the village into some semblance of order. This is after all the method of many local historians, but it seems to me to leave too much to chance, since the emphasis on any particular subject will depend not upon the importance of that subject, but merely upon the amount of available documentary evidence. That way leads a purblind antiquarianism, and antiquarianism is not history. Antiquarian-ism consists in the recording of a random collection of facts concerning the past; the facts are unassimilated and unselected and no attempt is made to establish their significance or relationship. History on the other hand, as the great French historian, Marc Bloch, once wrote, is *the answer to a series of intelligently*

posed questions. And local history, it seems to me, must meet this academic criterion if it is to be taken seriously. So finally, I started to think, not so much along the lines of *what records survive relating to Bedhampton* but more *what questions should I be seeking answers to when I look at those records.* And the three questions that seemed essential were, *why did people settle here, how did they support themselves and how many were they.* I shall now attempt to answer these questions in relation to Bedhampton.

In any historical survey of a particular area, an initial study of the geology, geography and topography of the area in question seems to me essential, for without a knowledge of these matters we cannot answer the question *why did people decide to settle in this place'* – and that question is surely the fundamental one to ask in any local historical study. So why was a settlement established at Bedhampton? An adequate water supply is essential to any community, and this was amply provided at Bedhampton by the numerous freshwater springs rising in the area. Another prerequisite is the provision of means of obtaining food. In this respect the land around Bedhampton was remarkably diverse and rich: forest to the north, sheltering game and providing fodder for pigs; a belt of good arable land south of the forest; rich meadows and pasture land along the shore of Langstone Harbour; and also the harbour itself as a source of fish and the Binness Islands within Langstone Harbour which houses colonies of seabirds, whose eggs would provide valuable food. A further natural feature which would have encouraged people to settle in the Bedhampton, Havant and Warblington area is their position at a natural crossroads, for here the route along the coast is intersected by a gap in the downs, where a gravel valley, the bed of a prehistoric estuary, cuts through the hills.

Having established the reasons why Bedhampton was a favourable site for settlement, the next question to ask is, *How did people gain a livelihood at Bedhampton?* – in other words how did the local economy function. We can, I think, learn much about the economy of Saxon and early medieval Bedhampton from the Domesday survey of 1086. Bedhampton at that time had eight ploughlands and three acres of meadow, two mills and two salterns, and extensive woodland which provided fodder for numerous pigs. From this we can deduce that the local economy was already diversified, comprising both animal husbandry and cereal production, and also the

manufacture of salt. In addition, a further aspect of the economy of medieval Bedhampton is illustrated by a much later document, the survey of the manor of Bedhampton taken in 1632. The survey contains the following passage:

There is within the manor of Bedhampton one piece of ground compassed about with the sea containing four acres of ground not flowed with the sea, where are yearly bred and taken forty dozen of fowl called pewitt. And there is likewise within the manor of Bedhampton a creek or piece of ground flowed with the sea at every full sea called the fowling grounds, wherein are yearly taken winter fowl, that is to say ducks, mallards, wigeons and other fowls called wild fowl of great profit and commodity and wrack of sea and hath been time out of the memory of man.

So I think we are safe in assuming that, throughout the medieval period, fishing (much is mentioned elsewhere in the survey) and fowling in winter would have formed part of Bedhampton's economy. The reference to *wrack of sea*, or seaweed, is also interesting – this was presumably used as manure to improve the land and, when dried, as fuel.

So the medieval economy of Bedhampton was relatively diverse and rich; indeed it is interesting to note that at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, Bedhampton was accounted as being of greater value than neighbouring Havant. Furthermore, from the inquest held after the death of the lord of Bedhampton manor in 1286 to ascertain the value of the manor, we learn that by that date a fulling mill had been set up at Bedhampton to process woollen cloth. We may, I think, presume from this that sheep rearing at Bedhampton was now on a larger scale than in 1086, when only three acres were given over to pasture.

However, the Black Death of 1348 and 1349 must have had drastic effects on the economy of Bedhampton. An inquest post mortem taken in 1331 shows the value of the manor as over £67; by the time of the next inquest, in 1353, the value of the manor has been cut by more than a half to £33. This stagnation in the local economy continued into the next century, for even by 1434 the value of the manor was little over half of what it had been before the Black Death. The situation in Bedhampton thus mirrored what was

happening all over England. The drastic drop in population consequent on the Black Death affected arable production more adversely than pastoral, since cereal production was more labour intensive than animal husbandry. In the local situation in Bedhampton, with its existing woollen cloth industry, this probably meant that the balance of the economy swung sharply from arable to pastoral products and that cloth production had become the staple of Bedhampton's economy by the fifteenth century.

An invaluable source for the economic history of Bedhampton during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is provided by the Survey of the Manor of Bedhampton taken on the 20 June 1632. This document has its own strange history: having been separated at some date from the main body of the Bedhampton manorial archive, it turned up in 1975 at a general auction in Gosport; the purchaser then offered it as a swap on Radio Solent's 'Swop-Shop' programme, and it changed hands again; subsequently the lady who acquired it as a swap sold the document to Portsmouth City Records Office. So what can we gather from this survey of Bedhampton in 1632, on the eve of the English Civil War? The overall impression is of a community in transition. The medieval parish had been dominated by the Park: not an ornamental garden in our sense, but a game forest which had occupied half the area of the parish. By 1632 'the Park', to use the surveyor's own words, *wherein were game of deer is now disesparked and converted into pastures and arables*. The medieval common, 100 acres in extent and called Padnell or Paddell, was still partly wooded and manorial tenants might graze their beasts there, but encroachment of settlement onto the common land had begun: Joan Carter, for instance, held a cottage and half an acre of land on Paddell waste. Rationalisation of holdings and enclosure of the medieval open fields had taken place: the dominant field-pattern is now one of 'closes' or enclosed parcels of land and only very occasionally is any mention made of a surviving open-field strip, or 'stiche' in the local dialect. One of the few examples runs thus: *Margery Perkins holdeth from year to year one stiche of land lying within the lands of Mathew Haraes*. The field-names of the new enclosures are often quite poetic: Shamblers, Sommerburyses, Foxcrofts, Bean-crofts, Milksopps, Golddivings, Chalcrofts. Other field-names survive today as place-names: Hooks, Duncesbury, Bidbury Mead. Although much of the medieval woodland had been cleared, creating fields called 'stubbings', the parish still contained

several hundred acres of wood and coppice. This was an important part of the local economy: some trees were allowed to grow large for use as house-timbers, others were 'coppiced' or cut after only a few years growth and used for making hurdles or wattles. A typical entry for Bedhampton woodland in the survey of 1632 runs thus: *There is a coppice called the Little Park Coppice containing 60 acres wherein are under woods at 9 years' growth to be sold at 50s an acre.* Fishing and wildfowling, to provide fresh meat during the winter, were of course still in evidence in 1632, in addition to the collecting of seaweed for fuel and fertiliser. The medieval salterns were also still in production.

More importantly, by 1632 a mill for the manufacture of paper had been set up at Bedhampton. Only one earlier reference is known to a paper mill in Hampshire and – an interesting thought – this survey of Bedhampton may well be written on paper made in Bedhampton. The description runs as follows: *There is one paper mill with a very fair paper house covered all with shingles and all necessities fit for the making of paper with a dwelling house for the paper maker near the said mill*'. The annual rent of this paper mill was £30, whereas the rental for the entire wheat mill malt mill and fulling mill all under one roof, together with land adjacent, was only £40. The paper mill seems therefore in 1632 to have been of considerable importance to Bedhampton's economy, though how long it was in operation we do not know. The mention of a malt mill indicates that brewing was also carried out in Bedhampton.

However, the basis of the local economy was still clearly agricultural rather than industrial. As we have seen, by the fifteenth century the production of wool had probably become of greater importance locally than the production of cereals. The exact time-scale is unclear, but during the sixteenth or seventeenth century in Bedhampton, this imbalance was evened out, and by 1632 the production of wool and cereals seem to be of equal importance. The Survey gives the use and acreage of most of Bedhampton's fields, and neither arable nor pasture seems to predominate. The interesting feature though is the conversion of Bedhampton Park – half the total area of the parish – to arable and pastoral use during this period. Such a large extension of the agricultural land of Bedhampton at some date during the sixteenth or

early seventeenth century clearly indicates an increased market for both arable and pastoral products.

However, during the seventeenth century the English woollen industry was hit by foreign competition and severely disrupted by the English Civil War, and it seems unlikely that Bedhampton's part in this industry would have survived the century, although of course some sheep would still have been reared on the coastal meadows which were unsuitable for arable production.

The trend in corn production on the other hand was all the other way. During the eighteenth century the population of England began to rise sharply, and more especially the population of towns. Since towns could not produce their own corn, they must import it from rural areas. Bedhampton was thus ideally situated to supply a growing Portsmouth with bread, and indeed its cereal crop might go even further afield: in the early eighteenth century Daniel Defoe in his *Tour through the whole island of England and Wales*, described how all the countryside around Chichester Harbour and Langstone Harbour was given over to corn production, the corn being ground in the local mills and sent to London by sea 'in the meal'. Certainly the land below Portsdown was suited to corn production: the agricultural propagandist William Cobbett travelled through the area in the summer of 1823 and found that the harvest here was the earliest in the kingdom, and that the crops grown – wheat, barley and turnips – were of the finest quality.

However, although production was easy, transport of produce from Bedhampton before the advent of railways was always a problem. Transport by sea was in fact the best way, for although Bedhampton was situated on the main Southampton to Chichester road, its condition, like that of most roads of the time, was deplorable. During the eighteenth century there were constant complaints that it was in disrepair, but the parish (which was responsible for the upkeep of the road) had great difficulty in maintaining it because of the small size of the population and consequent small income from the rates. In 1762 the road was taken over by the Cosham and Chichester Turnpike Trust, which paved the road but derived its income by charging heavy tolls for its use, so that the sea route was still cheaper. During the early nineteenth century the Portsmouth and Arundel Canal was constructed which, since it passed through Langstone and Chichester

Harbours, might have improved Bedhampton's communications, but it was a failure from the outset and soon ceased operation.

The railway between London, Brighton and Portsmouth was completed in 1847, with a station at Havant. Bedhampton's communication and transport problem was thus solved, yet too late to sustain the local agricultural economy. From the 1870s English agriculture as a whole strove increasingly unsuccessfully to compete with cheap imports of grain from North America and meat from New Zealand. In Bedhampton the corn mills closed one by one, and by the turn of the century all had ceased production.

However, the freshwater springs which had always hitherto been used to drive the mills of Bedhampton now gained a new use and importance as the source of Portsmouth's water supply. As each mill closed, it was bought, together with its water supply, by the Borough of Portsmouth Waterworks Company. This company had had a pumping station at Havant for a number of years, but, in the face of increasing demand from Portsmouth's rapidly growing population, in 1889 a second pumping station was opened, this time at Bedhampton. In 1902 the capacity of the Bedhampton pumping station was increased, and for the next 25 years the freshwater springs of Bedhampton were the main source of Portsmouth's water supply.

Bedhampton had thus by the turn of the century lost an independent economic structure of its own, and become merely an adjunct of Portsmouth. This process was hastened after 1906 with the opening of Bedhampton Halt on the railway. It became possible for the inhabitants of Bedhampton to travel daily to work in Portsmouth, and with ever fewer jobs available locally, Bedhampton settled into its modern role as a dormitory suburb feeding the economy of Portsmouth.

Illustration of the transition of Bedhampton from an agricultural community to a suburb is provided in a rough and ready fashion by the baptism registers of the parish. From 1812 these gave details of the occupation followed by the father of each child baptised, and by examining how frequently various occupations occur at different periods, the changing picture emerges.

Thus during the period 1813-1822, the occupation mentioned in the Bedhampton baptism registers more often than all other occupations combined, is that of agricultural labourer. Millers are also much in evidence,

and to a lesser extent farmers and agricultural craftsmen: wheelwrights, blacksmiths, shoemakers, a basketmaker. One innkeeper and one soldier appear, together with various maritime occupations: fishermen, mariners, lightermen, a pilot. No 'gentlemen' of independent means occur; more detailed research would be necessary to ascertain the reason for this. The overall impression thus gained of Bedhampton around the year 1820 is of a purely agricultural community.

During the period 1870-1879, the occupation of agricultural labourer still occurs almost as frequently in the Bedhampton baptism registers, and both millers and farmers are still much in evidence. However, the agricultural crafts and marine occupations have almost entirely disappeared. Railwaymen now appear in some numbers, as do brickmakers, bricklayers and joiners, denoting an increase in building activity. Middle class professional and commercial occupations also appear for the first time: greengrocers, an accountant, a chemist. 'Gentlemen' of independent means now appear quite frequently, and indeed their servants – gardeners, coachmen, bailiffs, gamekeepers - form the second largest group after the agricultural labourers. The armed forces also appear in larger numbers. So the picture we get of Bedhampton around 1875 is of a community in transition from an agricultural to a commercial economy.

During the period 1927-1936, the Bedhampton baptism registers indicate that the occupation of agricultural labourer is in sharp decline, and the most common occupations are now general labouring and the armed forces. The farmers are much fewer in number, and the millers have totally disappeared. Railwaymen still appear, and bricklayers in even greater numbers. Commercial occupations, both middle and working class, form a considerable group: shop assistants and managers, bank clerks, commercial travellers. Another sizeable group of occupations are those based on motor transport: lorry and van drivers, chauffeurs, mechanics, an AA patrolman. The 'gentlemen' and their servants appear in declining numbers, but the professional group – teachers, dentists, solicitors is growing. The impression thus gained of Bedhampton around 1930 is of a moribund agricultural economy: work is no longer found locally, by and large, but mainly in the commercial and naval economy of Portsmouth. In other words, Bedhampton has completed its transformation from a village to a dormitory suburb.

The third question we must ask when considering the history of any community is *how many people were there in that community*. The quantity of evidence available to answer this question in respect of Bedhampton is surprisingly large but, for the period prior to the inauguration of decennial civil censuses in 1801, the quality of the evidence is low. The only indisputable fact that emerges is that Until this century the population of Bedhampton was very small, numbering no more than a few hundred people. (I should mention here that I am indebted to Mr Stapleton of Portsmouth Polytechnic for supplying me with much of my demographic data relating to Bedhampton, though the responsibility for its interpretation rests on me alone.)

Partly because of the nature of the evidence, and partly because I believe it enables us to visualize the local community more easily, I have concentrated more on establishing the number of households or economic and social units in Bedhampton at various periods than on attempting to guess vaguely at the total population. Indeed, even if we could establish exact population figures for past centuries, the figures would be delusive, for they would contain a far higher proportion of children (many of whom would not survive childhood) and a lower proportion of economically active adults than we are used to today.

The Domesday Survey of 1086 indicates that at that date there were 19 tenants of the manor of Bedhampton, and seven ministers attached to the church. Havant was at this time of a similar size; its subsequent relative growth is perhaps attributable to the lack of any demesne land there: in Bedhampton the manorial tenants held their land in return for work on the lord's demesne, whereas in Havant the development of commercial and industrial life was necessary so that the tenants could pay a cash rent for their land.

The inquest following the death of the lord of the manor of Bedhampton in 1327 shows considerable growth in the size of the village, for by that date there were 45 manorial tenants. Even supposing that only 40 of these lived at Bedhampton (the others merely holding land there), the village probably had twice as many households in 1327 as in 1086.

However, as we have seen, the Black Death of 1348-1349 reduced the value of the manor by half, and obviously had a drastic effect on the population of

the village. Even by 1525, when we have the evidence of the Lay Subsidy Rolls, the number of taxpayers was only 26: allowing for those exempt on grounds of poverty this still indicates only about 35 households, fewer than in 1327 and not many more than in 1086.

Worse was to come: in 1558 and 1559 an influenza epidemic hit the entire country. Hampshire was in fact the first county to be affected, and though we have no direct evidence for Havant or Bedhampton, the Farlington burial register which survives from this period shows that there, almost twice as many burials took place in 1558-9 as in the whole of the previous 20 years. The Lay Subsidy Rolls for Bedhampton in 1586 show only 10 taxpayers, as opposed to 26 only 60 years previously. Allowing for exemptions, we may perhaps assume a figure of about 15 households in the village in 1586 – fewer indeed than 500 years previously!

The Ecclesiastical Census of 1603 called for a parish-by-parish count of the number of communicants – in other words Anglican men and women but not children. The figure for Bedhampton was 55, which might indicate about 25 households, but unfortunately this projected estimate is vitiated by the fact that we do not know the strength of recusancy in the parish at this period.

The manorial survey of 1632 names 33 tenants which, allowing for those who resided elsewhere, perhaps indicates about 28 households in Bedhampton – fewer than 300 years previously. The survey actually allows us to compute the amount of land held in the manor by each tenant, from the 200 acres of Nicholas Binsted to the one acre of Joan Carter. Roughly a third of the tenants in fact had such small amounts of land that they must be classed as impoverished.

This estimate of the incidence of poverty in the village fits in well with the local returns for the Hearth Tax of 1665; 26 households, including seven exempt on grounds of poverty.

The ecclesiastical census of 1676 – the Compton Census – gives the number of communicants in Bedhampton parish as 48 (as opposed to 55 in 1603) and the number of recusants as seven. This may indicate again about 26 households in the village; the slight decline in population during the century being attributable perhaps to the general dislocation of life caused by the Civil War in mid-century.

From 1686 the parish registers of Bedhampton survive. Because of the relatively high level of recusancy in the area, emanating from the Cotton family of Warblington Castle, lords of the manor also of Bedhampton, I am exceedingly wary of attempting to compute population figures from the Anglican registers. Furthermore, the effectiveness of registration may well have varied at different periods: at certain periods the registers have obviously been compiled with care, whereas during for example the 1730s a semi-literate curate seemed to have been entrusted with registration, with devastating results. However, I do think that general trends can be established by a comparison of annual baptism and burial figures, and that local population crises – such as epidemics – can be identified.

Between 1686 and 1760, years when baptisms predominate occur only slightly more frequently than years when burials predominate. After 1760 this pattern changes markedly, and years when baptisms predominate become the norm; indeed, during only six years between 1761 and 1850 do burials outnumber baptisms. Furthermore, from about 1800 the actual number of baptisms begin to rise rapidly, whereas burials stay at the same rate. In fact, given the small population of the parish, what this actually means is that after 1800 the annual rate of baptisms went into double figures whereas the annual burial rate stayed in single figures!

To return to years of population crisis in Bedhampton, I had an idea that these, whether caused by poor harvest or epidemic, ought to be reflected also in the Havant and Farlington burial registers, as well as in those for Bedhampton. However, this proved to be only partly true. Years of population crisis in Bedhampton were 1705, 1729, 1732, 1746-7, 1759, 1820 and 1847. These were always reflected either in Havant or Farlington, but never in both together. The most interesting years were 1746-7, when over 100 people died in Havant (three times the average) and 20 people in Bedhampton, and 1759, when 13 people died in Bedhampton, 12 of them in October and November of that year. Twelve people also died at Farlington in 1759; unfortunately the contemporary Havant Burial Register contains a note that the entries from 1758-1761 were 'destroyed by accident'.

The evidence derived from the Bedhampton parish registers regarding local population trends – namely of a static level of population until about 1760 and a steady rise thereafter – is borne out by the population figures

given in the two eighteenth century Episcopal Visitation returns for the parish of Bedhampton. In 1725 there were apparently 161 inhabitants of the parish, including 69 papists, described as *farmers and others of little note* - illustrating the strength of recusancy in the parish and the relative weakness of the Church of England. In 1788 there were *about 270* inhabitants - a considerable rise, although this figure includes only 20 papists, *including children and servants*, and *about six* protestants.

By 1801, as we learn from the first national civil census, the population had risen slightly to 305. By the time of the 1901 census, a century later, the population of the village had risen again to 712. Thus during the course of the nineteenth century Bedhampton's population more than doubled; however, to put this into perspective, it is worth noting that the population of Portsmouth over the same period rose six times from 32,000 to 190,000 people. Bedhampton was in fact experiencing relative stagnation during the nineteenth century, but was to achieve its apotheosis during the present century as a suburb of Portsmouth. For while the population of Portsmouth itself between 1901 and 1971 rose only marginally from 190,000 to 197,000 people, Bedhampton grew from a village of 712 people in 1901 to a suburb of 6,275 people in 1971 - a nine fold increase in 70 years!

However, we must not fall into the error of seeing Bedhampton as a stable community, with families staying in the village for centuries. In fact preliminary research suggests quite the opposite. Only four of the ten surnames which appear in the 1586 Lay Subsidy return for Bedhampton are to be found among the 1632 manorial survey's 33 surnames. Some purely local migration during these 50 years is evident: seven surnames which occur in Havant in 1586 and one which occurs in Farlington are to be found in Bedhampton by 1632. Nevertheless, this still means that of the 33 surnames found at Bedhampton in 1632, only 12 can be traced in the area 50 years previously - in other words nearly two-thirds of the population of the village had no long-term connection with the area. Similarly, of the 33 Bedhampton surnames occurring in 1632, only nine can be traced in the parish registers between 1686 and 1720, again indicating that roughly two-thirds of the population had migrated into the village within the previous 50 years or so. Two families do however have a long history in the village. The surname Mengham is mentioned first in a fourteenth century court roll of

Bedhampton, and survives in the area to the present day – in the current telephone directory for the Portsmouth area, eight Menghams appear, six of whom live in the Havant/ Leigh Park/Bedhampton area. Originally weavers, the Menghams were extremely numerous but also poor by the eighteenth century. The surname Hipkin, though less common in Bedhampton than Mengham, first occurs locally in the sixteenth century and again is still to be found in the area today. Their fortunes seem to have improved over the centuries. In fact by using the techniques of family reconstitution on the raw material provided by the Bedhampton parish registers, it would be possible to discover much about the class structure of the village and the changes therein over the centuries.

I am aware that all I have done in this talk is to supply the bare bones the skeletal structure of a history of Bedhampton. I am aware that there are many aspects of the history of the village on which I am ignorant and have not therefore attempted to speak. I am aware that there are interesting and important parts of the history of Bedhampton which I have passed over in my talk since they could not be fitted into its general scope. I have, for instance, for the purposes of this talk ignored widow King, who in 1696 was chosen as one of the two 'overseers of the poor people' of the parish – a surprisingly early instance of a woman appointed to a parish office. I have similarly ignored during my talk the intriguingly progressive resolution passed unanimously in 1832 by the Vestry or parish council of Bedhampton, when it was decided 'after the most mature consideration that the only plan to give effectual relief to the poor will be by rendering their minds independent and it is therefore resolved unanimously that a parcel of ground as near as possible of ten acres be hired by the parish and let out in half-acre plots to such persons as the parish may judge most worthy and deserving of such benefit' Interesting as these and other such details are, they are after all only flesh on the bones of Bedhampton's history, and I have judged it more useful to give you the skeleton of that history rather than merely the boneless and disjointed flesh. I hope in conclusion that you will not pass on me the judgement of an anonymous nineteenth century wit:

Yes you can spout and you can preach, But what does all your talking teach? We know as much when you have done, As when you that long speech begun.

Editor's Note. This is the text of a lecture delivered by Mr. Eeles to a joint meeting of the Friends of Portsmouth City Records Office and the Portsmouth Museums Society on 21 October 1982.

A Brief History of Bedhampton

Mavis Smith

In A.D.501 Saxons invaded Portsmouth, defeated the inhabitants and took possession of all the surrounding countryside, including Bedhampton.

During the next three hundred years development and changes took place, as records exist that in A.D.837 the Manor of Bedhampton and its land were granted to the Cathedral Church of Winchester by Egbert, King of Wessex.

During the reign of the Saxon King Alfred, Danish invasions commenced, pillaging the village and laying it to waste. Further invasions took place until all England was conquered and Canute proclaimed King. Story has it that it was at nearby Bosham where Canute demonstrated he was unable to repel the sea. Soon after his death in 1035, Bedhampton Manor was let to Alsi who held it until the Normans took possession in 1066.

In 1086 William The Conqueror ordered a census of the whole land – the Domesday Book – and under the heading “The land of St. Peter, Winchester”, Bedhampton has the distinction of a direct mention. The entry states “*Hugo de port ten. de abbatia BETAMETONE.*” (Hugo de Port holds BETAMETONE from the Abbey).

As time progressed Bedhampton's name changed from Betametone to Bethameton and Bethametona (one source dates these uses from 1167 and 1242) to Bedhamton through to Bedhampton.

In 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* described Bedhampton like this:

Bedhampton, a village and a parish in Havant district, Hants. The village stands on Langston harbour, adjacent to the South Coast railway, 1 mile W of Havant; and it has a post office under Havant,

commands a charming sea-view, and is noted for its fine springs. The parish comprises 2,416 acres of land and 190 of water. Real property, £4,182. Pop., 576. Houses, 119. The property is divided among a few.

The manor once belonged to a dowager Countess of Kent, who took a nun's vow in grief for the death of her husband, afterwards married Sir Eustace Dabrieshes-court, founded a chantry in penance for her marriage, and died here in 1411. The living is a rectory in the diocese of Winchester. Value, £328 Patron, E. Daubeny, Esq. The church is a small, old, substantial edifice, with pointed steeple."

Bedhampton

Bedhampton, a former village, is now a suburb located in the Borough of Havant. It is to be found at the northern end of Langstone Harbour and at the foot of the eastern end of Portsdown Hill and is close to the A27, M27 and A3(M) roads.

Modern Bedhampton has a railway station one mile west of Havant with services to Portsmouth, Brighton and London together with connections to Southampton, Bristol and South Wales.

The Havant to Portsmouth railway was opened in 1847 but Bedhampton Halt did not open until April 1, 1906. In the late 1940s it came under the control of Havant for staffing. During August 2007 the old platform surfaces were upgraded, new shelters and railway gates added in addition to Platform 1 (eastbound) being extended to make it suitable for longer trains.

Churches

There has been a church in Bedhampton since 1086. The present Parish Church of St Thomas The Apostle, situated in Lower Bedhampton, dates from the 12th century. In 1953 a church centre was built and dedicated to St. Nicholas. There is also a Methodist church in Hulbert Road. A Gospel Hall built between 1901 and 1902 with funds provided by a local benefactress, Miss Isabella Dennistoun Meiklam, was closed in 2010.

Parks

Bedhampton is well served with open spaces where people can relax. The Hermitage Stream Walk runs to the north of the parish, from New Road to Purbrook Way. In the centre of Bedhampton is a large open space bounded by Hooks Lane, part of which is home to the Havant Rugby Football Club.

To the south of Bedhampton Road is Bidbury Mead, a large tree lined recreation ground, which is home to the Bedhampton Mariners Cricket Club and the Bedhampton Bowling Club. People also enjoy the space and facilities provided at Scratchface Recreation Ground situated to the north-west of the village.

Schools

The House of Commons Education Enquiry, 1835, records that there were two 'Dame Schools' in Bedhampton in 1833. The old Bedhampton School was built in 1868 on the corner of Bedhampton Road and Kingscroft Lane to the design of Richard William Drew, a London architect. Miss Dust was the original mistress, serving at the school until 1876. On reviewing her logbook she records that she had to "reprove a boy for fighting". Further she appears to have been frequently visited by the squire, William Stone, M.P. and the rector, Revd Edmund Daubeney, B.A.

Bedhampton School Board was formed in 1871, the land and school was leased to the Board in 1873 to be used as a school, Sunday school and public meeting rooms. Also in 1873 the school was enlarged and again in 1895 for about 180 children.

The school closed in 1985 and for a time was the Bedhampton Arts Centre but has now been converted in to flats. However, this Grade II listed building still remains largely intact.

After World War II, school places were at a premium and extra places were created by converting part of the former HMS Daedalus III Naval Camp into Stockheath Primary School. This was located where Tarrant Gardens has now been built.

In 1974 Hampshire County Council decided to split the primary intake. A new school, for the older children, was built on land adjacent to Hooks Lane Recreation Ground; this school was named Bidbury Middle School.

A long campaign commenced to move the Stockheath First School to the same site. This eventually took place in February 1985 and in 1994 they became Bidbury Infant and Junior schools.

Bedhampton is also home to a Roman Catholic Primary School, St Thomas Moore's.

The Roman Catholic Church

Christine Houseley

The present Roman Catholic Church in West Street was built in 1875 to replace the chapel in Brockhampton Lane, which was too small to serve the needs of a growing community. By this date, the Brockhampton Chapel was also considered to be too far from the town centre, though its secluded position must have been greatly in its favour in the days before the passing of the 1791 Catholic Relief Bill.

Throughout penal times Havant played a vital part in the preservation of the 'Old Faith' in Hampshire. The Elizabethan Settlement, which imposed fines for non-attendance at the services of the established Church of England, was strongly resisted throughout the county. Havant was a centre of this resistance, both because of the position of the town near the sea routes to the continent, and because of the adherence to the catholic faith of many of the local families of gentry. In addition, Havant had been since the Middle Ages one of the manors belonging to the Bishops of Winchester, and as such was outside the direct jurisdiction of the ordinary ecclesiastical authorities. This fact may help to explain why a mission flourished there at a time when there was no catholic church or chapel in either Portsmouth or Chichester. Portsmouth was in Brockhampton Parish until after the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill, when a chapel was built at Portsea.

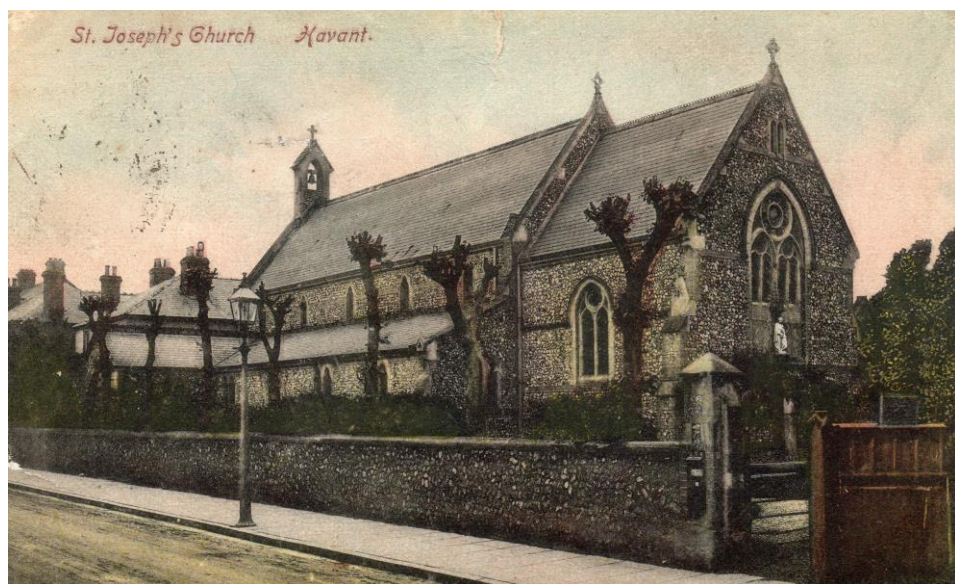
A Catholic Mission with a resident priest was established at Langstone in about 1711. Before that date the catholics in the area were ministered to by visiting priests, and by the chaplains secretly maintained at some of the great houses in the area. The mission moved to Brockhampton in 1750 or 1751, and a house and chapel were built near Budds Farm by Father David Morgan.



The altar in St Joseph's Catholic Church.



St Joseph's Catholic Church.



These were completed in 1752. The Bulbeck manuscript, written between 1896 and 1899, describes:

A very substantially built house and chapel. The house is in the front, the chapel over the kitchen, scullery, pantry and staircase from the outside leading to it – stables for the use of the congregation.

Existing photographs show that the exterior of the building effectively concealed the chapel. Built at a time when the penal laws against catholics were still in force, the chapel contained a hiding place for the priest in a tiny choir loft. Even when the laws were relaxed, the notice board at the door only said: *Afternoon Prayers on Sundays* (not Mass).

Two priests were based at Brockhampton to minister to catholics over a wide area. Writing to Bishop Douglas in London in 1814, Father Richard Southworth (a descendant of the martyred John Southworth, and parish priest of Brockhampton for 30 years), described his congregation as follows:

The whole, including men, women and children, servants in protestant families and others, from what I can calculate amount to nearly 200 souls; all of whom may be considered as belonging in one way or other to this mission. A good many live at a considerable distance in various directions: and of these several do not frequently come to the chapel; and some few but seldome, owing to greater distance or difficulty.

This is scarcely to be wondered at in a parish which stretched from Chichester to Portsmouth and beyond. For those who did not own horses, it must have been well-nigh impossible to attend chapel regularly. The Bulbeck manuscript mentions an old lady who could remember people coming to take their horses for £5 each from their farmyard to get to mass on Sundays.

The priests, too, were forced to do a great deal of travelling. The Brockhampton Registers record baptisms at Hilsea, Fareham, Portchester and Portsmouth to the west, and Chichester, Fishbourne and West Wittering to the east.

It was during Richard Southworth's time at Brockhampton that the chapel became known as St Joseph's. Father Southworth described in a letter how he had put his flock under the special patronage of St Joseph, as he had received holy orders on the feast day of that saint. The first of the Baptismal Registers kept at the present church in West Street, bears on its title page the inscription: *Liber Baptisatorum in Ecclesia Sancti Josephi Apd.*

(Brockhampton) Havant. The volume records baptisms during the period 1855–1956, with no mention of the change of building. After the move from Brockhampton to West Street, the old chapel was used as a ballroom and a fruit and vegetable storeroom until it was destroyed by fire.

The present church was built for the sum of £3,000, including the presbytery and school. The money was raised by the sale of property in the town and by a subscription started in 1836 by John Bulbeck. A field was bought at Town's End, through which the Hayling Billy Leisure Trail now passes, and plans were drawn up by Mr Scoles. *Very hideous – that would have settled the attempt to build if there had been nothing else to do so!* remarks the writer of the Bulbeck manuscript.

It seems that other people agreed with him as Mr Scoles' plans were never used. When the present church was built on a site in West Street donated by Mr West the architect was Mr J Crawley of Bloomsbury, London. Mr West also gave the window over the altar and built the wall round the cemetery.

The *Hampshire Telegraph's* account of the opening of the church on 15 August 1875, states that: *The great feature in the church is the altar, which is one of the best, if not the best, we have seen in the district.*

The altar was the gift of the same John Bulbeck who started the subscription for the church. Its carved panels represented scenes in the life of Saint Joseph. With the rearrangement of the sanctuary in 1974, the panel depicting the death of St Joseph was moved from the base of the original altar to the front of the new free-standing altar table.

Admission to the church on the occasion of its opening in 1875 was by ticket only, which cost 5s. (25p) each, a great sum in those days. Nevertheless, the church was crowded with people, including many of the poorer members of the faith, to hear mass and a sermon preached by Cardinal Manning.

After the service, the clergy and a large number of the congregation proceeded to the town hall where luncheon was served by Mr J Purnell of the Dolphin Hotel.

The church was consecrated 32 years later on Thursday 18 April 1907. The ceremony, with its three processions round the church for the blessing of the walls and the consecration of the altar stone, began at 9.15am and ended at 12.15pm. In the evening the church was again full of people gathered for a special service of thanksgiving.

By the time the move was made from Brockhampton Lane to West Street, the mission was served by one priest only instead of two. The opening of other catholic churches in the neighbourhood had diminished the area that the Havant priests were expected to serve, although baptisms at Portsmouth are recorded in the registers as late as 1877.

However, with the building of the Leigh Park housing estate, the number of people in the parish became very much greater than at any time in the past. In 1950 a Mass Centre was started in Emsworth, and the priest at St Joseph's was granted the help of a curate in 1952. Leigh Park became a separate parish in 1964. St Joseph's Church celebrated its centenary in 1975, with a special mass said by Bishop Worlock of Portsmouth and watched on closed circuit television in the parish hall by those who could not squeeze into the church.

Hidden Bedhampton

Compiled by Alan Palmer

Introduction

For many people Bedhampton is just a few more houses on the way to Portsmouth, but there has been a village here for at least a thousand years.

The old village is only a few yards from a busy railway line, and the A27 trunk road, but it remains quiet and peaceful. You can stroll along a lane that hasn't changed much in two hundred years, then drive to the motorway in two minutes.

Why not follow the Bedhampton Trail and discover this delightful place with its mixture of old and new?

Bedhampton Village Trail

A circular walk starting and ending in Bidbury Lane car park.

Go through the gate into the churchyard, and follow the path, bearing left past the Church to the other gate. There are several interesting tombs here, especially the Snells and the Snook family to the right of the path, the Lee family under the yew tree, and by the other gate, Miss Isabella Meiklam – you will find their influence later on. The Parish Church of St Thomas is 12th

century, and probably stands on the site of an earlier Saxon church. It has been extensively changed and adapted, rebuilt and modified, over the years, not always to universal approval. There is a very readable guide book to the Church, which gives full details of the building and its history, and also contains information on the early history of the village and the Manor.

Opposite the Church, on the corner of Bidbury Lane and Mill Lane, is Bidbury House, a Georgian residence dating from about 1760, with a very unusual asymmetric frontage. Note the characteristic local brickwork on the north wall, facing the Church, where warm red bricks are used in contrast with the blue-black headers. Bidbury House has had many owners or tenants over the years, a mixture of clerics, tradesmen, military officers, and gentlemen. The best-known was Commander William Snell, who bought it to let in 1895, when he retired after a distinguished naval career.

As you leave the churchyard, turn right into Bidbury Lane. The next large house, sadly concealed behind its high wall, is the Rectory. Another imposing 18th-century building, it has many interesting architectural details, such as blind windows. It became too large for modern church use, and so the much smaller new rectory was built next door in 1958.

Turn up Edward Gardens opposite the rectory to the Manor House. The core of the house is probably 16th century, but can only be seen from the rear. The side wings and the facade are Victorian additions in the Tudor Style. Rescued from demolition in 1967, the Manor House, together with The Elms and The Lodge, is now owned by the Manor Trust which provides homes for the elderly.

Retrace your steps to Bidbury Lane, turn right, and continue along the road until you reach the junction by the stream. Ahead of you as you approach the junction is The Elms. Originally built in the 17th century, it was altered and extended in the 18th in a bold Gothick style, providing a sophisticated contrast to the conservative Georgian houses in the old village. On the north side is a castellated and ornamented tower, with the arched entrance to a fine ballroom said to have been built specifically to entertain the Duke of Wellington. The Duke was related to the owner, Sir Theophilus Lee, whose family tomb with its sad inscription you may have seen in the churchyard. The Waterloo Room is now well looked after by the Manor Trust and is home to their annual Art Exhibition in May, and many Bedhampton Society events.

Also worth a look at this point is Manor Cottage (originally a pair) on the left hand side. Note that the familiar red and blue coloured brickwork is not exclusive to the grander houses.

Turn right and walk up beside the brook which would have provided early Bedhampton with its water supply. It is fed by a spring in the garden of one of the houses at the north end of the road, and by a stream from the other side of the main road which is now channelled through a culvert. Cleaning the stream is a popular annual event which demonstrates the fondness local people have for their brook.

Brookside Road was the main street of the village, and until the early 19th century was the main Chichester to Portsmouth road. Note how the character of this 1,000-year-old village is continuously changing – there is now only one building on this stretch much more than fifty years old. This is Spring Lawn House, halfway up on your left. Built in the early 19th century this pleasant-looking house demonstrates the sense of elegance and proportion of its time.

As you reach the main road, keep to the right hand side. Pause and look straight ahead across the road. There is a visible kink in the boundary walls and fencing opposite, which indicates the original alignment – until about 1800 the road went straight on at this point and then made a sweeping curve, of more than 90 degrees, to the right.

Two important events probably influenced the construction of the new Bedhampton Road to your right – the building of Belmont House around 1735, and the establishment of the Cosham to Chichester Turnpike Trust in 1762, with its objective of improving and maintaining the main road.

Belmont House was built on the slight rise across the main road, ahead and to the right of where you are now, very close to the original road. You will get a better view of the location later on.

The new straight stretch to your right cut off the long curve, and replaced the road leading past Belmont House. Part of the old road was retained as the carriage drive to the house, with gates and a lodge opposite Brookside road.

The other new section, up the hill to your left – Bedhampton Hill – provided a straight if rather steep alternative to the narrow and twisting original road at the bottom of the village.

On the other corner of Brookside Road, facing the junction, there was from the 1880s until 1971 a row of shops, run over the years by four generations of the Coldman family. As well as a grocery store, there was a bakery and butcher's shop, and for many years Bedhampton Post Office. The bakery is still remembered for its superb cottage loaves. In the sharp angle between Bedhampton Hill and Portsdown Hill Road, facing east (downhill), was the original Belmont Tavern. With the pub, shops on the corner, and quieter, narrower roads, and the entrance to the big house, this was a focal point of the village, although the buildings here were not particularly attractive or elegant in themselves.

Now turn right and continue along Bedhampton Road. On the other side of the road you can see houses built in the 1950s on the site of Belmont House – Bedhampton's 'Big House'. Belmont House was built about 1735 for the Rt Hon William Talbot, later Lord Talbot. The house faced east, standing roughly just beyond the pub, where Norman Way is now. The estate was about 150 acres, stretching as far as the top of Portsdown Hill.

Belmont had a succession of colourful owners, but perhaps the most important were Sir George Prevost (1767-1816) and Sir James Stirling (1791-1865).

Prevost lived at Belmont from about 1805 when he was created 1st Baronet of Belmont, taking his title from his new residence. As a Major-General he was Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth Garrison from 1806 to 1809, and then held high office in Canada and British North America. Unfortunately, his unsound strategy in the 1812 war with the United States led to him being ordered home for court-martial, but he died before it could be convened.

Stirling explored the Swan river in Western Australia, founded the site of the future city of Perth, and remained there as the first Governor of Western Australia until 1839. He owned Belmont from 1846 to 1860.

In 1937 the remaining portion of the estate was sold for housing development, and the house was demolished in 1938. A few houses were built before World War II, then the site was used by the Royal Navy for a transit camp. The new Belmont pub was built in 1969 complete with its misleading sign – "Belmont" means 'Beautiful Hill' – nothing to do with bells!

As you continue along Bedhampton Road, on your right, behind the hedge, traces of a mediaeval field system, with its characteristic long narrow strips, could be detected until the modern houses were built.

Pause for a moment by the traffic lights, where three roads meet. The turnpike road was new in the 1800s, Hulbert Road, opposite, was built about 1880, but the main road on towards Havant was first built by the Roman army, soon after the invasion in AD43. Some people say that parts of the present surface are original too.

Continue past houses built in the 1930s in 'ribbon development' along the main road, before such expansion was curtailed by the planners. On the other side of the road, the houses and shops date mostly from the 1920s and mark the start of rapid expansion of the village.

After a few hundred yards, you will see ahead of you the original village school, built in 1868, and now converted in to flats. The new village school was built in 1974, on the other side of the main road, out of sight behind the houses.

You are now approaching the eastern half of the village, and some of the buildings here date back to the 18th century. Bedhampton grew up in two distinct parts, separated by fields and parkland. The halves did not join together until 1950s housing closed the gap.

Cross the lane and walk on along the main road past the old school. Most of the architectural interest here is on the other side of the road. The office of the tyre workshop is very old and was once a pub called The Wheelwright's Arms. The Gospel Hall, now converted in to flats, dates from 1901/2, and its manse, Dennistoun House next door from 1904/5. Both were built for Miss Meiklam, who was a leading local figure in the contemporary religious movement away from the Anglican church (but still managed to get herself buried right outside the door of the Parish Church of St Thomas). The Golden Lion, next door, has been licensed since the early 18th century. There are some old buildings below the pub, some of which were shops in earlier times.

At the bottom of the hill is the railway, built in 1846-47, although there was no station here until 1906. The route of the original Roman road, and 18th century turnpike, continues through the level crossing and on towards Havant. New Road, sweeping away to the left, and now the major road. Legend says this was built at the insistence of Sir George Staunton of Leigh

Park, to bypass the two level crossings he found in his way when driving to Portsmouth. In fact he probably went this way as it was across his field and created a track which was later constructed as a proper road by William Stone.

There was a toll gate on the turnpike road, approximately where the railway level crossing is. Traditionally the small cottage next to the railway footbridge is supposed to be the toll keeper's cottage, but maps show that this was on the other (north) side of the road. There was a fine Victorian signal box on the Havant side of the gates, on the left-hand side. Unfortunately this was demolished in 1979.

On the right-hand side immediately after the railway crossing is the site of Bedhampton's original Primitive Methodist Chapel, built in 1891, and finally demolished in 1997, although the Methodists had moved to Hulbert Road in 1958.

Now retrace your steps to the old school. Cross over Kingscroft Lane, and bear left along the footpath. This takes you into Bidbury Mead, with its football and cricket pitches. The footpath across the Mead will take you back to the car park.

In the corner, behind the playground, there are springs. There are more near the railway, and many more south of the line. There is not much to see from here, but this is the edge of a huge system stretching away into Havant, that provides much of the water for the entire Portsmouth region. On the left, across Bidbury Lane, on both sides of the railway, was once an industrial area, with mills and an army biscuit factory.

When you reach the car park, note the new extension to the Church, built in 1993 to blend in with the old construction. The churchyard wall is also worth a look. By the graveyard, it is made of knapped (fully shaped) flints. Further along, where it becomes the garden wall of the Manor, there is some superb old brickwork, and a very old door set in the wall. From here, you can just see the original timber framed centre section of the Manor House.

More

If you have time and energy, there's plenty more. From the corner of the car park by the churchyard wall, cross the road and walk along Mill Lane, with

Bidbury House on your right. Take another look at the unusual Georgian frontage, and the successive later additions on the south side. The huge holm oak tree above you was planted when the house was built.

The next building along the lane is 'The Old Granary'. It was built in 1868 as a grain store, during the boom years of the corn trade. Note the ornate frontage for what is basically an industrial building. In the 1930s it was converted into a squash court, and is now a private residence. In the field opposite was a biscuit factory, said to have supplied the army during the Crimean War. The factory had its own railway sidings, one of which came up to level with the granary. Factory and sidings were demolished in the 1890s.

Continue up to the crest of the bridge, and take a look at the view to the left eastwards towards Havant. In front of you, one field away, the lanes can be seen to converge on the railway from both sides, and there was a level crossing here, complete with the gate-keeper's cottage and a signal box. There were sidings on the south (right-hand) side, which although long disused, were not removed until 1964. Most of the visible buildings to the south of the railway belong to the Portsmouth Water Company. Originally there were two corn mills here. The Upper Mill has vanished without trace, but stood at the top of the present pond.

Bedhampton Mill was at the other end of the pond. If you walk a little further down the slope, there is a gap in the trees through which you can see the Old Mill House (17), the home of John Snook, mill owner and friend of the poet John Keats. The poet's visits to Bedhampton are mentioned on a plaque at the back of the house, which reads:

"In this house in 1819 John Keats finished his poem "The Eve of St Agnes" and here in 1820 he spent his last night in England"

Unfortunately, this is as close as you can get to the house and its plaque.

On your right you will see a sign-posted footpath, which doubles back under the bridge and goes along beside the railway to the water works, then continues to Havant. Even if you don't feel like following the path, it is worth walking the few yards under the bridge, then looking back to get a close-up view of the actual skew arch over the railway line. It is a superb example of the Victorian bricklayer's art.

Mill Lane once continued southward to a private quay belonging to the mill, but it has now become a rather muddy footpath popular with dog-walkers. It leads to a footbridge over the A27 trunk road, and then into modern landscaped industrial sites and coastal amenity areas, almost all on land reclaimed over the last fifty years or so. There are several possibilities for pleasant walks in this area, which is very different in character but just as much part of modern Bedhampton as the historic old village.

Diversions

Diversions from the above village walk, of interest to more energetic types – lots of uphill. If you stand at the roundabout at Belmont Junction, you can see two roads up the hill – Bedhampton Hill to the left and Portsdown Hill Road to the right. In earlier times, these were known as the Front Hill and the Back Hill. Both are worth a walk, but note the gradient!

Front Hill

There are some interesting houses on Bedhampton Hill. On the right hand side going up, look out for the first house, much rebuilt but retaining early 19th century brickwork and interesting windows. Number 10 resembles the fashionable Victorian houses built by Thomas Ellis Owen in Southsea, with interesting details reminiscent of contemporary railway station architecture. Further up, number 38 has a superb 1930's frontage.

On the left hand side there are three pairs of semi-detached houses (nos. 19 to 29) which take the late 19th-century fashion for 'long and narrow' to remarkable limits. On the right hand side, just over the crest, on the original straight alignment, is the site of the home of one of Bedhampton's most famous former residents, Fred T. Jane, Bedhampton Scoutmaster in 1914, and originator of Jane's Fighting Ships and Jane's All the World's Aircraft. Jane was proud of the fact that his house was built on the site of the 'Cat and Fiddle', an old inn with smuggling associations.

The turnpike road originally continued on its dead straight course until it met the old road through the village at a dangerous bend at the bottom of the hill, known as Fir Tree corner. It was diverted to the roundabout in 1978 when the A3(M) motorway was built.

Back Hill

Continue up Portsdown Hill Road. The houses here are a mixture of mostly 20th century styles. On the corner of The Dell stands a well-proportioned Victorian house which was once Belmont Farm House. All the land to your right, on the north side of the road, was once part of Belmont Park.

A little way up the hill, the hollow on the left, which used to contain a bowling alley and a DIY centre, and now a housing development, was once a chalk pit which produced chalk and quicklime for agricultural and building purposes. Continue across the bridge over the motorway, and little further on, you reach Belmont Castle. This dramatic house, known as 'The Towers' for many years, was built about 1800 on the site of a 'belvedere' or viewpoint, and belonged to the Belmont estate until about 1860. Miss Meiklam acquired it in 1894.

At this point, the road originally went straight on, roughly where the gate into the field now stands. This is the course of a prehistoric ridgeway along the crest of the hill, dating from times when to the north was impenetrable forest full of wild animals and evil spirits, and to the south was swamp and marsh. A short distance along the track is a site known as Bevis's Grave, where there are remains of a neolithic long barrow and a sixth and seventh century Saxon burial ground.

The road was realigned to its present position between 1860 and 1868, to make room for a string of forts along the length of Portsdown Hill. The first one was about half a mile further along.

The last house along this stretch is worth a look. Called 'Sunspan', it is a classic example of Bauhaus architecture, but it is difficult to see properly from the road. It was featured as 'House of the Year' in the 1934 Ideal Home Exhibition.

Retrace your steps down the hill. Stop for a moment on the motorway bridge and take in the view southwards, towards the sea. Two hundred years ago this was some of the best corn-growing land in England.

North Bedhampton

What about north of the main road? Nothing much as far as the village is concerned except Belmont Park, until the 1920s. Originally, Scratchface Lane ran round the edge of Belmont Park, and through the woods to Purbrook. The Bedhampton end of the lane was made up during the 1960s. Park Lane, which takes its name from the mediaeval deer park, provided access to the farms and hamlets to the north. Hulbert Road was built privately and opened in 1881 to provide a link through the forest to Waterlooville. Haphazard house building began on these roads around 1900 and gathered pace during the 1920s. This results in an interesting if untidy mix of styles now on these roads. Very rapid expansion followed in the 1950s, when South Hampshire was said to be the fastest growing area in England. The pressure to build more homes continues unabated to the present day.

Long walk

A longer walk, mostly within old Bedhampton, about an hour or so, circular from the car park.

Follow the footpath across Bidbury Mead to the old school, then turn right down the main road as far as the railway crossing. So far you are still on the Village Trail. From the railway crossing, follow the old road towards Havant, past mostly 19th-century houses (some originally shops), over the Hermitage Stream which used to be the boundary between Bedhampton and Havant, and take the next right turning into Meyrick Road.

Continue along Meyrick Road, noting the 1957-built scout hut, with its resourceful use of recycled materials, on your right. There are some imposing Victorian or Edwardian houses here, now surrounded by modern development. Go straight on along the concrete track, and follow it round to the Water Company's gates. The footpath off to the left is known as Jubilee path. Follow the path, then at the stile turn right over the bridge, crossing the Hermitage Stream again.

All around you at this point are signs of the Portsmouth Water Company's activities. Look behind you for glimpses of the huge engine house of Brockhampton pumping station, probably the biggest building in the area when it was built in 1925. The landscape to the south (away from the village)

is completely modern – the A27 bypass which you can probably hear if not see was built in 1965, and the factories are about the same age. Before this time, this prospect was bleak and empty marsh all the way to Langstone harbour.

Ahead of you, attractively set in the trees at the far end of the lake, is the old Mill House, associated with the poet John Keats. Details can be found in the Village Trail.

The path will take you past the 1939-built pumping station on your left, and you can also see the Victorian pumping station to your right. Other than these buildings, there is little outward sign here of this vital industry, but you are now in the middle of a complex of springs that provide vast quantities of fresh (and very hard) water. Several of the springs produce a million gallons a day, and one near the railway sometimes goes up to more than two million.

At the end of the path, follow the lane up to the railway. The site of the level crossing is easy to see. On the far side of the line a modern house stands on the site of the original signal box and gate-keeper's cottage. To your left is a new footpath, provided when the railway crossing was closed. This path will take you to Mill Lane, where you can pick up the Trail again. At the start of the path, you pass very close to the site of the Upper Mill, mentioned in the Trail. After the first fifty yards or so, you can see the remains of railway sidings in the paddock on your left. The lake you can see from here was the mill pond for the lower mill, which stood near the house.

Approaching from this direction, you get a good view of the railway bridge. Be sure to take a close look at the brickwork of the skew arch over the railway line. How was it done?

Follow the path underneath the arches, and up to the lane, then turn sharp left and walk over the railway. From here, Mill Lane will take you back to the car park.

Editorial team: Alan Palmer, Jan Palmer, John Pile, Judith Worley
Historical advisor: John Pile
Original inspiration: Dean Clarke
With invaluable assistance from the members of The Bedhampton Society, especially Harry and Elaine Bradley, June Crate, Jennifer Kyle, Paddy and Michael Williams.

The Portsdown Shutter Telegraph

Bob Hunt

By the end of 1792 the French were leading the way in an astounding new system of signalling based on a plan evolved by the six brothers Chappe. The French Empire was using 'levered Semaphores' situated on towers nine to ten miles apart and were able to send messages over hundreds of miles at around 1.75 words per minute.

The Admiralty (the Royal Navy Headquarters) in London took note of this because the Napoleonic Wars were now being fought out and a machine was needed which could send and receive any desired message between them and their fleet based at Portsmouth. At this time all messages had to be delivered by Horsemen which at the very best took 4.5 hours.

The Reverend John Gamble had invented such a machine and was sent to Portsmouth to carry out trials. This was a five shutter machine allowing 32 (2 power 5) different signals. It was erected on Portsdown and on 6 August 1795 he reported that it was complete and in working order. However the Admiralty had decided to use a design by Reverend Lord George Murray instead. This machine consisted of 6 shutters in two columns in a vertical frame 20 feet high. Each shutter could be either closed or open which gave 64 different permutations (including all open and all closed). During September 1795 successful experimental trials were carried out on Wimbledon Common. Murray was awarded £2,000 for his invention, and Mr. George Roebuck was made Superintendent of Telegraphs on a salary of £300 per annum.

The Admiralty to Portsmouth telegraph became known as the 'Portsmouth Shutter Telegraph Line' and during March 1796 work commenced on building it. It was ready a few months later. There were 10 signalling stations. These are listed together with their modern location: It seems that the Telegraph was never meant to permanent but was intended for use only until the end of the Napoleonic Wars, as the construction of the signal stations was little better than a sturdy hut with two rooms and a coal shed. It was very successful however taking about 7.5 minutes to send a signal from

Portsmouth to London. Its main drawback was that it could only be used in good visibility and during the daylight hours.

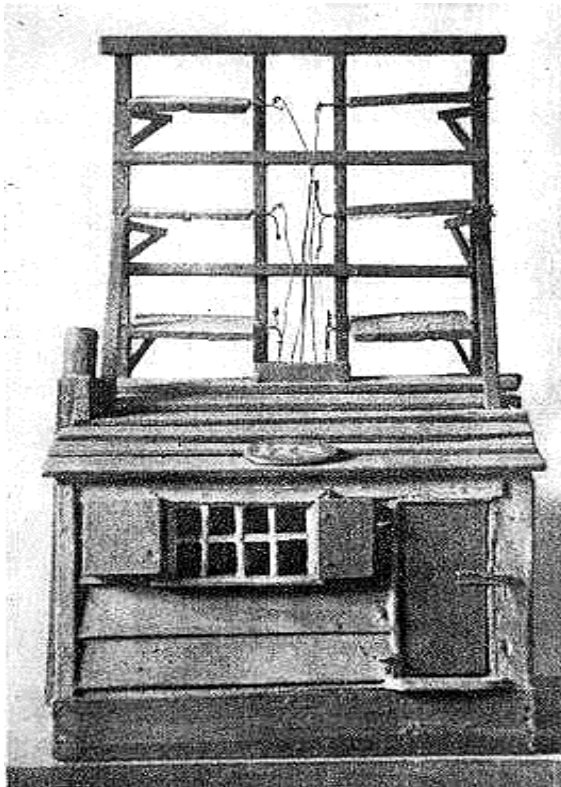
- 1 Roof of the first Lord's house - Whitehall
- 2 Chelsea - Royal Hospital
- 3 Putney - near Telegraph Inn
- 4 Cabbage Hill - near Chessington Zoo
- 5 Netley Heath - 'Telegraph', Blind Oak Gate
- 6 Hascombe - Telegraph Hill
- 7 Blackdown - Tally Knob
- 8 Beacon Hill - Harting Down
- 9 **Portsmouth Hill** - various references: "Cosham Road Junction - south of crossroads" "near Cliffdene Cottage"
- 10 Portsmouth - Southsea Common by Clarence Pier

There were probably four men at each station. Two men watched through telescopes - called Glassmen - for a signal from the stations on either side of them. When they saw the signal 'all shutters closed' or 123456, they would call the two 'ropemen' who would operate the station's shutters to relay the message along the line. The Glassmen and Ropemen would have interchangeable jobs and one of them would be the Foreman. There may or may not have been a RN Officer with them.

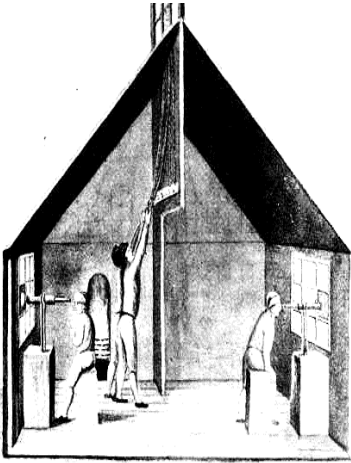
On 18 May 1814 peace was proclaimed, Napoleon was banished to the Isle of Elba. On 6 July 1814 the Portsmouth Shutter Telegraph Line was ordered to 'immediately discontinue'. Napoleon had other ideas. He escaped from his prison island and landed in France on 1 May 1815. Once again England was at war and the Portsmouth Shutter Telegraph was re-established. Seven weeks later on the 18 June 1815 Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo and ten days later on the 28 June 1815 the Admiralty announced plans to establish a *permanent* system of stations using Semaphore - a machine with movable arms.



The arrow shows the location of the Portsdown Shutter Station. It was near Cliffdene Cottage which was demolished in the 1980s?, and south of Cosham junction which refers to the B2177 / London Road crossroads slightly to the east of the arrow.



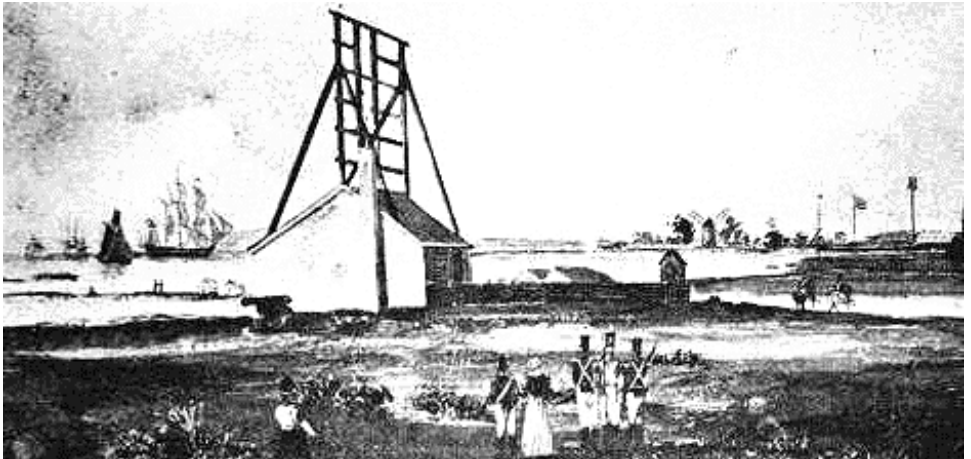
This is a model of the Portsdown Shutter Station showing the six open shutters and their control gear. The construction was clapper board with a brick chimney (left). A lean-to coal shed would be constructed on the right side. The label on the roof shows the number 178 for reasons unknown.



A view inside the station showing two Glassmen on telescopes and two Ropemen operating the shutters.



The Glassman is reading the signal from the next station in the line and the Ropemen are relaying the message on. The inset shows the outcome of their efforts - the number 13.



The Portsmouth terminal station located on Southsea Common. This would send and receive messages from the Portsdown station 5.5 miles to the north. All the shutters are set to open - station idle. They went to all closed as a signal that a message was about to be sent.



Looking east on top of Portsdown 2004. The Portsdown shutter station was located here. To the left is the site of the former Cliffdene Cottage. Centre left the white walls of the George Pub can just be seen, then a road sign on the B2177. Interestingly on the far left is the Shutter Station's modern day counterpart.

The Portsdown Semaphore

On 29 June 1815 an act of Parliament was passed enabling the Government to acquire land for the new Semaphore Telegraph Stations. These were to be a permanent replacement for the Shutter Telegraph described previously. From March 1816 when the Shutter Line was closed until the end of June 1822 when the Semaphore opened, Portsmouth was without a telegraph communication. In most cases the location of the new Semaphore stations were not the same as those of the old Shutter stations.

There were various designs submitted for the new Semaphore Telegraph, but the Admiralty chose a design by Rear-Admiral Sir Home Riggs Popham. His idea was to use two signalling arms, instead of the three used by the French, at different heights on a mast 30 feet high. By July 1816 an experimental line had been constructed between the Admiralty and Chatham

and was in working order. The Semaphores were made by Messrs Maudslay and the telescopes were supplied by Dollond.

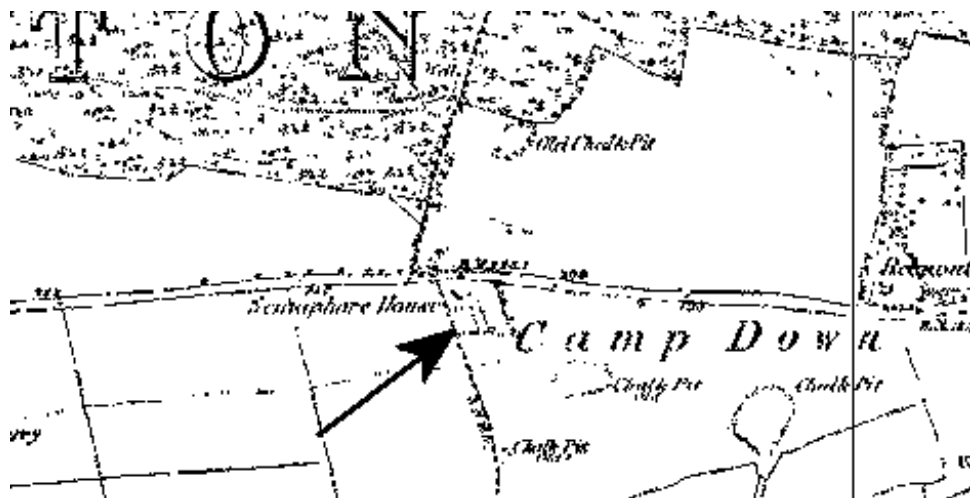
On 19 February 1818 Mr Thomas Goddard, a Purser from the Royal Yacht - *Royal George* - was instructed to carry out a survey of the route of the old Portsmouth Shutter line with a view to working it with Popham's semaphore. After much delay in acquiring land and with building work, the stations began working at the end of June 1822. The cost of maintaining the stations was £3,000 per annum.

- 1 Admiralty - London SW1
- 2 Chelsea - London SW3
- 3 Putney Heath - London SW15
- 4 Coombe Warren - Kingston-on-Thames
- 5 Cooper's Hill - Esher
- 6 Chatley Heath - Cobham
- 7 Pewley Hill - Guildford
- 8 Bannicle Hill - Goldalming
- 9 Hastle Hill - Haslemere
- 10 Holder Hill - Midhurst
- 11 Beacon Hill - South Harting
- 12 Compton Down - Compton
- 13 Camp Down - Portsdown Hill
- 14 Lumps Fort - Southsea (needed to avoid the smog of Portsmouth)
- 15 Portsmouth Dockyard - Portsmouth

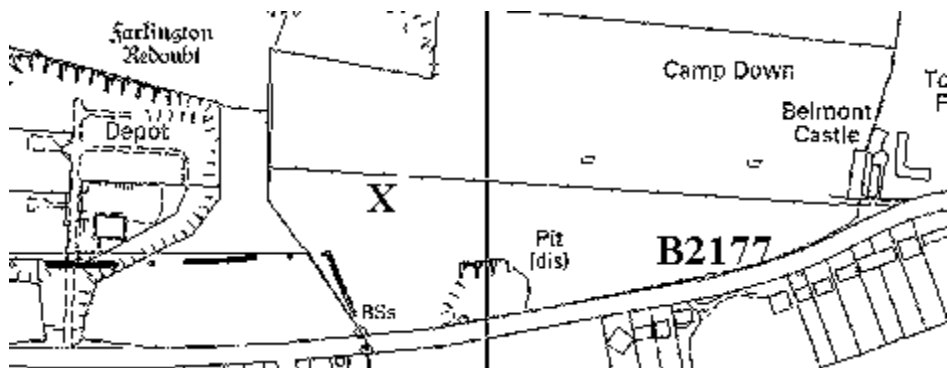
The new Semaphore Stations were of far more substantial construction than the Shutter Stations they replaced. There were four different designs to suit the different geographical locations. The one at Portsdown was an ordinary looking country bungalow of five rooms each about 13 feet by 11 feet. The roof was slated and the walls were rendered brick. The Semaphore room was 8 feet by 7 feet 9 inches and sat on top of the building which was unique to this station. The telescopes were located in tubes set in holes cut through the

walls. There was no well and all water had to be transported by the station's own water cart for which a horse had to be hired. The station crew consisted of an RN Lieutenant and a Handyman - or Signaller - who was often a retired sailor.

The mechanical Semaphore was finally overtaken by modern technology in 1847 with the coming of the Railways and the Electric Telegraph. Wires were laid alongside the LSWR line into the Royal Clarence Yard at Gosport and then by submarine cable under Portsmouth Harbour to HM Dockyard Portsmouth. On the 13 September 1847 the stations' crews received their redundancy notices and were finally stood down on 31 December 1847.



An 1870 map showing the location of "Semaphore House" on Camp Down. In fact by 1870 the station had been demolished and the roadway moved 208 yards south to accommodate the construction of the Palmerston Forts in the 1860s. The forts never appeared on these early maps for reasons of national security, in fact some never appeared until 100 years later.



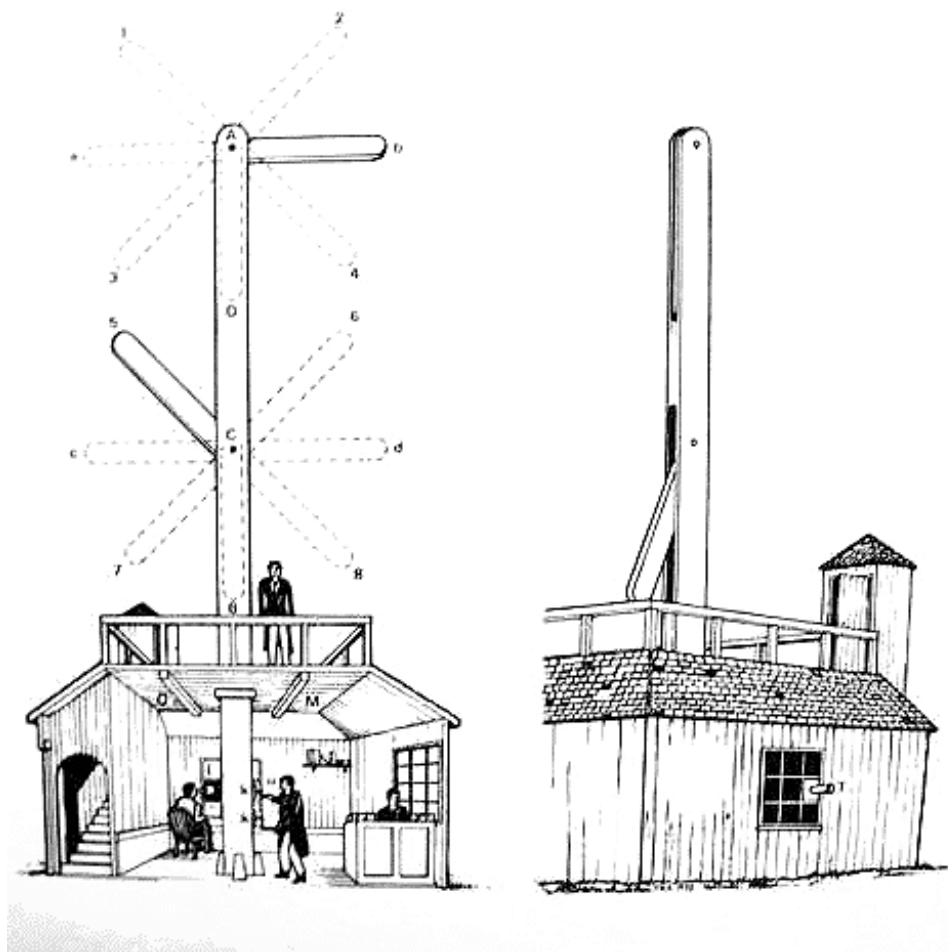
A 2004 map, the 'X' showing the location of the Semaphore station. Notice that the roadway (B2177) has moved south something which caused me some confusion whilst researching this subject. The position for the above plot was obtained by transferring the 12 figure grid ref (468875,106412) from the 1870 map. The course of the original roadway, which was Pre-historic/Roman, exactly follows the west/east fence line above the 'X'. It was moved south because Farlington Redoubt on the left would have sat bang on top of it.



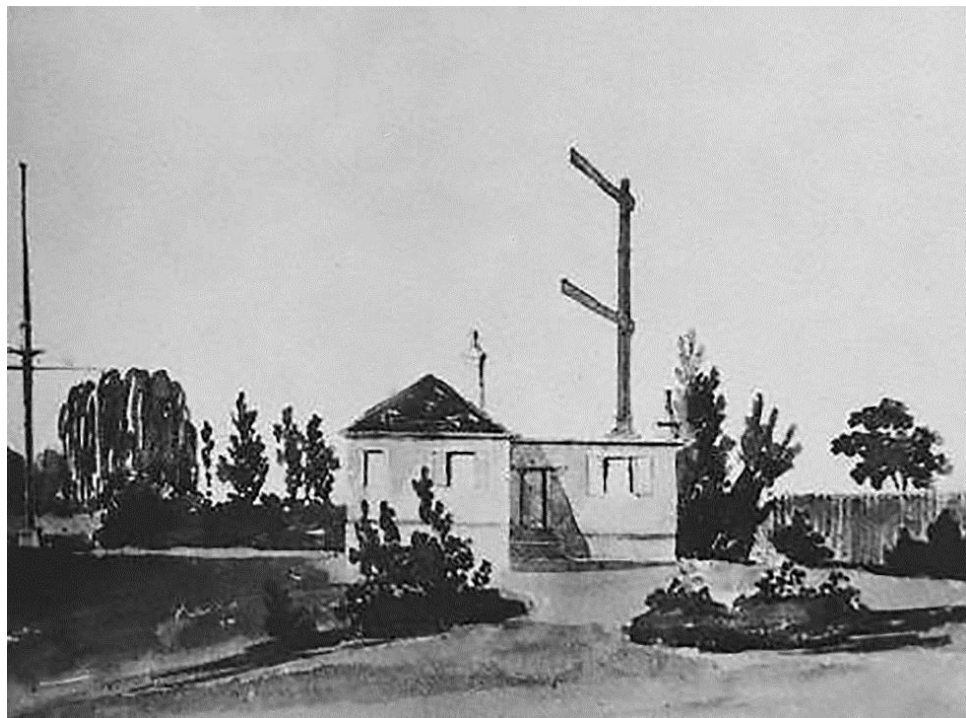
An aerial photo showing the location of the Semaphore Station (X). The course of the original roadway is clearly defined as the boundary between the two different coloured fields. The polygonal scar is what's left of Farlington Redoubt. The ROC is known to have used this area in WWII, and the tiny mark in the field just above and right of the 'X' is possibly the base of a Nissen Hut, there are two others to the east of it out of shot. Camp Down is also reputed to have been the training ground of many of England's Archers and is the site of Bevis Long Barrow.



Camp Down (2004) looking east towards Belmont Castle (now a rest home and not a castle at all) on the middle left. The Semaphore Station would have been in the mid-ground where the darker patch is. One acre of land was allocated to the station for vegetable growing, chickens etc. and it was surrounded by a hedge and later a railed fence. The original roadway ran where the fence is on the left.



A representation of the the Semaphore stations used on the Portsmouth Line. The masts were 30 feet high with two arms 8 feet long and 1 foot 4 inches wide. When at rest the arms folded inside the mast.



The photo above shows the Putney station which was of similar design to the Portsdown Semaphore Station of which no photographs appear to exist. However the Portsdown station had an extra floor where the semaphore mast is shown with the mast on top of this. Portsdown was also the only station not to have a cellar though this is contradicted in some documents.

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The Wheelwright's Arms.



Bedhampton in Bloom, 2012.



West End looking towards Havant.



West End looking towards Bedhampton.



The Prince of Wales pub and the horse and cart are in Havant but the people are standing in Bedhampton.



Before the Havant War Memorial Hospital was built Sunday fundraising demonstrations (parades) by Friendly Societies were held to support the Emsworth and Portsmouth Hospitals. This Parade was held on Sunday 5 August 1906 and is seen at the level crossing.





On the lower road circa 1911.

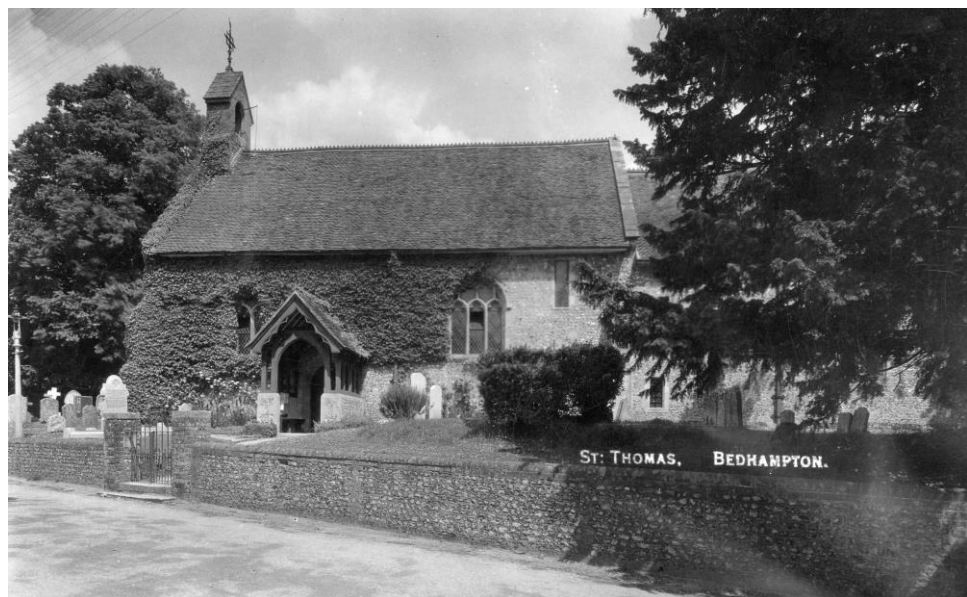


The Parish Church of St Thomas.

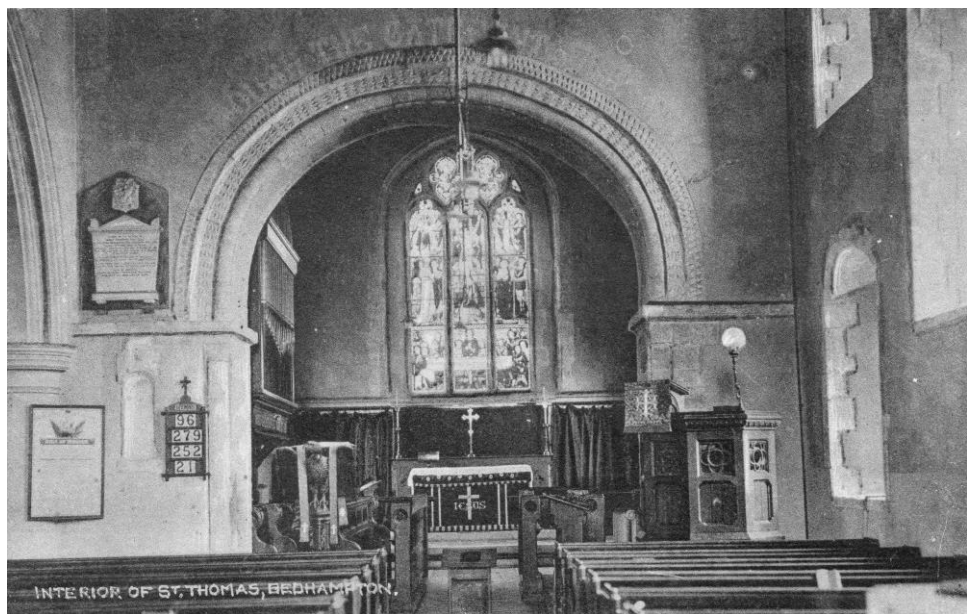


The Parish Church of St Thomas.





The Parish Church of St Thomas. circa 1908.





The Parish Church of St Thomas, circa 1909.



The Parish Church of St Thomas and the Manor House.



Cattle at rest.



The Rectory where Alice and Pelham Stokes lived.



Bedhampton Rectory circa 1904.





Brookside Road.



Brookside Road circa 1928.



The stream Brookside Road.



Brookside Road circa 1928.



Brookside Road.



The Rectory from Brookside circa 1908.



Brookside Road.



The Elms.



The Elms circa 1932.



Hulbert Road.



Scratchface Lane, Hulbert Road and Park Lane.



The old school.



A rural scene circa 1905.



Bedhampton crossing circa 1960s. The original Act stipulated a road bridge was to be provided here. It has yet to be built. *Author.*



The level crossing and traffic queuing in New Road.



The Methodist Church (in use by Lubins) and signal box.



Staunton Road level crossing. The footbridge was built in 1970.



New Road.



New Road and bread van.



View from the Mill Lane bridge showing the siding in to the waterworks.



In 1984 the Bidbury Mead Women's Institute decorated the station with baskets and tubs of flowers, firstly on their own initiative and then as part of the Beautiful Britain project run jointly by British Rail and the WI. The Keep Britain Tidy group awarded them a special mention certificate in the annual Queen Mother's Birthday Awards. Holding the watering can is 'Station Master' John Arter, a railway servant for 46 years, 36 of them at Bedhampton, assisted by Christine Baldwin and Margaret Green.



Bedhampton Halt.



Semi-fast Brighton to Portsmouth Harbour service, head code 60, passes Bedhampton signal box in May 1947. New Road seen before widening.



Electric Multiple Unit headcode 62, Brighton to Portsmouth stopping service, at Bedhampton Halt in 1960. The wooden platform station was opened in 1906.



Bedhampton Road.



Engine Driver Bill (Milky) Couzens on the top of the flywheel of one of the Portsmouth Water Company's Worthington Simpson triple expansion engines.



The Home Stores, 1958, formerly the Wheelwright's Arms. *Alan Bell.*



Bedhampton Road circa 1910.



Havant Road [Bedhampton Road] circa 1950s.

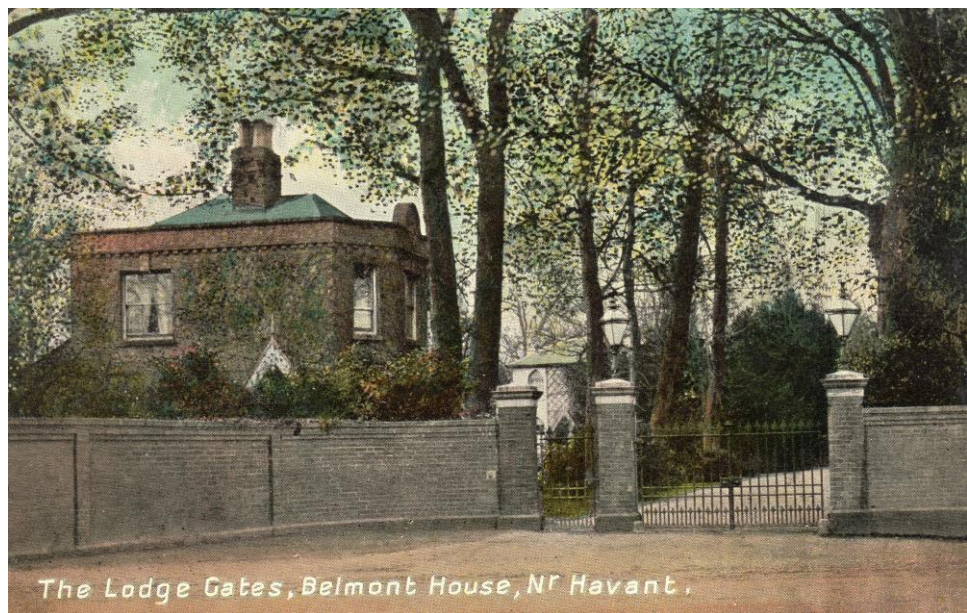


Stirling Stent and his family at Beechlands, Bedhampton Hill. When the main drainage was installed in Havant traffic was diverted through the park, which meant the fountain had to be removed. It was put in Councillor Stent's garden for safe keeping but never returned.



Wounded service men being entertained at Bedhampton by Mr and Mrs Stirling Stent. August 1916.





The Lodge Gates, Belmont House circa May 16, 1908.



Belmont House circa 1907.



Coldman's Stores and Post Office at the Belmont.





Belmont.





A pre-war Southdown bus, possibly a No. 31 service, at the Belmont Tavern.



Painting of Belmont Tavern, 1908.



The Rest, Bedhampton Hill, circa 1914.



Bedhampton Hill.



Bedhampton Hill.



At Bedhampton circa 1912.



A Portsmouth Corporation DD bus, on probably on the 148A or 148B service, approaches Fir Tree Corner. Lower Road is on the right. *Alan Bell.*

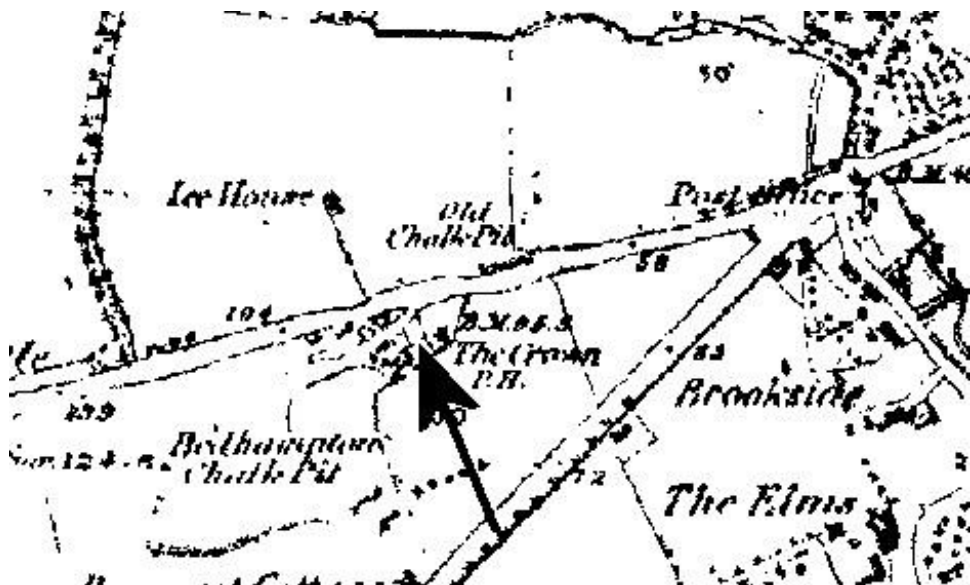


Lower Road circa 1910.

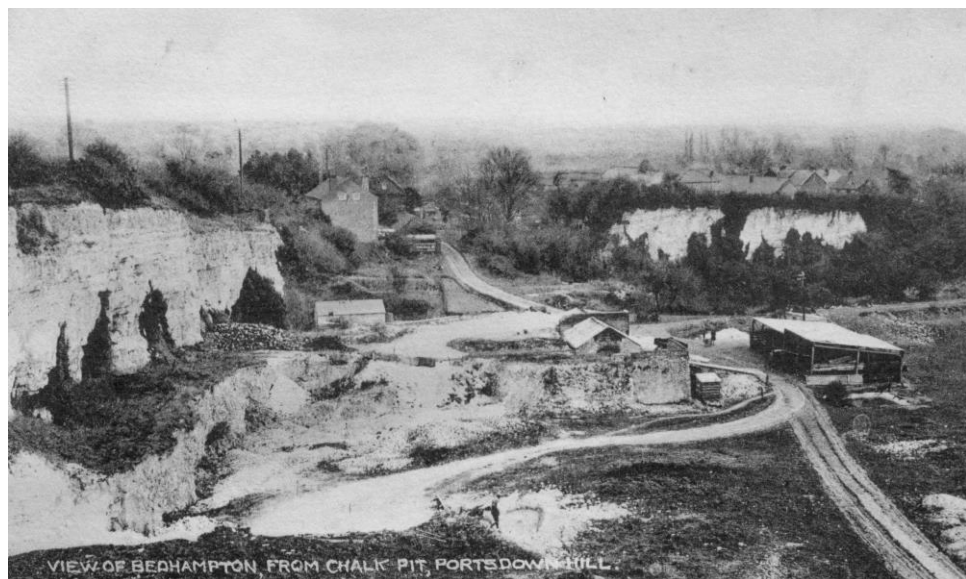


Belmont Hill [Portsdown Hill Road].

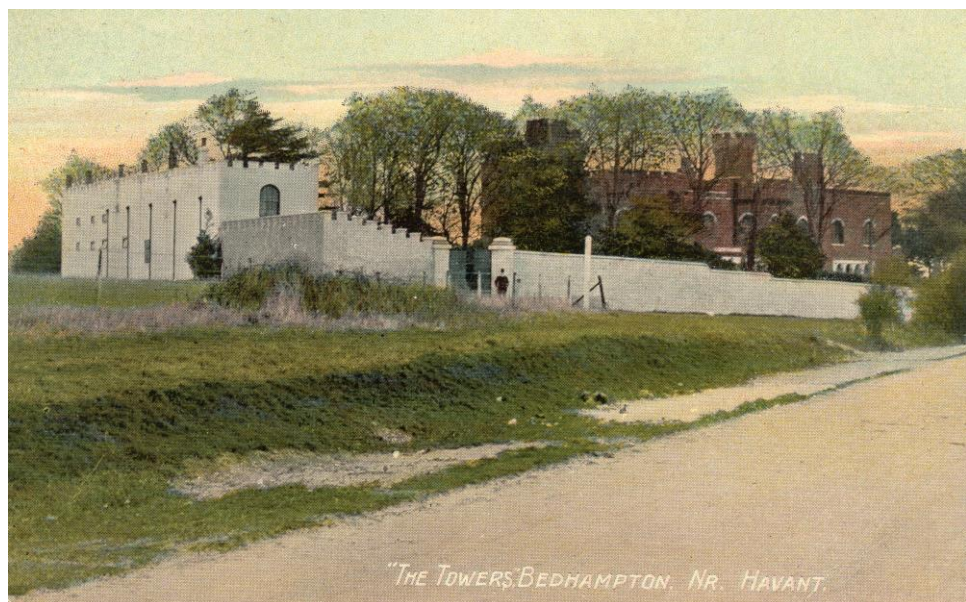




Ordnance Survey map circa 1865 showing the Bedhampton Chalk Pit and the locations of the Crown public house and post office.

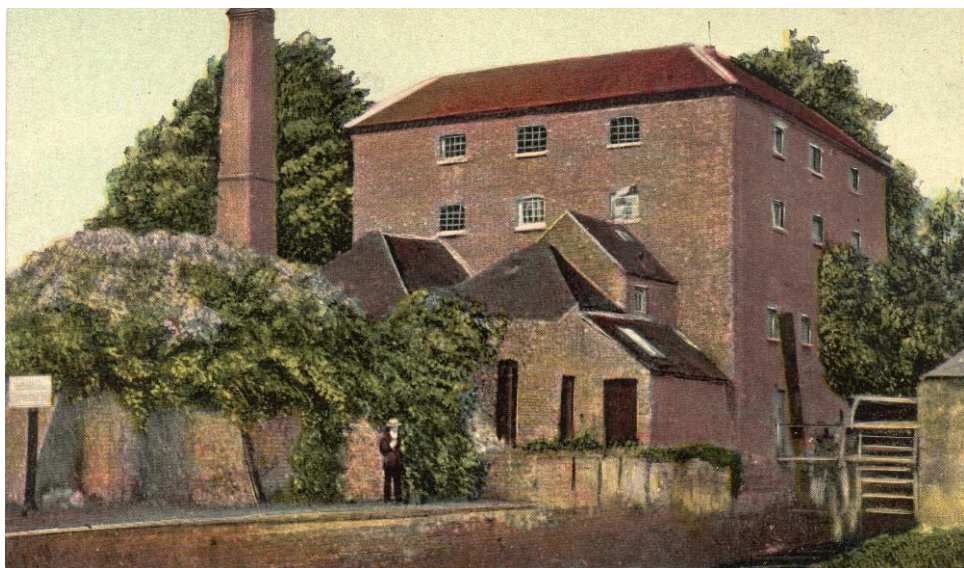


View of the chalk pit circa 1908. The Crown public house was located just inside of its entrance.



The Towers circa 1908.





The Old Mill circa 1908.



The mill pond.



The Mill Stream.



Bedhampton School 1909.



A Portsmouth Corporation Atlantean bus on the 143A or 143B service to Leigh Park at the junction of Hulbert Road and Purbrook Way before the roundabout was built.



Bedhampton Football Club.



The Bedhampton Band, 1913.




Bedhampton – Happy Christmas 1903.



The Manor House.

The Girls' Friendly Society
MEMBER'S CARD.



Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
 —GAL. VI., 2.

Blessed are the pure in heart.—S. MATT. v., 8.

Winchester Diocese
 Bedhampton Branch
 Bedhampton Parish,

Member's Name *Dorothy Madge Summer*
 { Home Associate *Mrs. Pelham Stokes*
 Address *Broom Hill Bedhampton*

Date of Admission *12 April - 12.*

To prove Membership this Card must be accompanied by the Member's Guide-Book
 receipted up to date. [Copyright.

Church of England Religious
Education Union

ASSOCIATE'S CARD



Name *Dorothy Madge Sumner*
 Address *Main Road, Bechampton*
 Parish of *Bechampton*
 Diocese *Winchester*
 Date of Admission *Sunday Sept. 21st 1913*
S. Thomas' Bechampton
H. P. M. A.

Church of England Religious
Education Union.

*Under the rules of the Union all Helpers in
 Sunday Kindergartens are eligible
 as Associates.*

PRAYER FOR ASSOCIATES.

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, of Whose
 only gift it cometh that Thy faithful
 people do unto Thee true and laudable service ;
 Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faith-
 fully serve Thee in this life, that we fail not
 finally to attain Thy heavenly promises ; through
 JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*



S. THOMAS' BEDHAMPTON,
CHRISTMAS DAY, 1922.
Holy Communion 7.15, 8 and noon.



Bedhampton Village Sign.

In 2002 a village sign was erected by the Bedhampton Society containing an inscription from the works of John Keats, (1795-1821), who is known to have stayed in Bedhampton near to the Parish Church of St Thomas in 1819.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases;
It will never pass in to nothingness."

John Keats

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